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LAUGHTER AND LOVE: THE ROLE OF HUMOUR STYLES IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS

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LAUGHTER AND LOVE: THE ROLE OF HUMOUR STYLES IN DATING
RELATIONSHIPS

(Spine title: Humour Styles in Dating Relationships)
(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Sara M. Caird

Graduate Program in Psychology

1

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

Certificate of Examination

Supervisor

Dr. Rod Martin

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Lorne Campbell

Examiners

Dr. Lorne Campbell

Dr. Nick Kuiper

Dr. James Côté

The thesis by

Sara M. Caird

entitled:

**LAUGHTER AND LOVE: THE ROLE OF HUMOUR STYLES IN DATING
RELATIONSHIPS**

is accepted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

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Date _____

Chair of the Thesis Examination
Board

Abstract

This investigation examined the associations between relationship-focused humour styles and relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as well as positive and negative interactions between dating partners. Undergraduate students ($n = 136$) completed measures that assessed trait-level characteristics, as well as a series of online questionnaires that assessed their relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction, positive and negative interactions in their dating relationships, and their use of humour styles with their partners over the previous three days. Time-lagged analyses were conducted via Hierarchical Linear Modeling to examine the directionality of the associations between variables. Some associations were reciprocal. Daily increases in affiliative humour were associated with future increases in relationship satisfaction and positive interactions. Conversely, daily increases in relationship satisfaction and positive interactions were also associated with future increases in affiliative humour. Similarly, daily increases in aggressive humour were associated with decreases in future relationship satisfaction, while daily increases in relationship satisfaction were conversely associated with lower levels of aggressive humour in the future. Other associations were unidirectional. Daily increases in relationship dissatisfaction and negative interactions predicted future decreases in affiliative humour. Daily increases in aggressive humour were also associated with higher levels of future relationship dissatisfaction and negative interactions, whereas daily increases in positive interactions were associated with lower use of aggressive humour in the future. Finally, daily increases in relationship satisfaction and positive interactions were associated with lower levels of self-defeating humour in the future. Affiliative humour appears to be especially relevant to young dating

relationships. Individuals who used higher levels of affiliative humour with their partners were more likely to still be dating their partners at follow-up. Also, when participants used higher levels of affiliative humour, their partners reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction. These findings suggest that affiliative humour may promote relationship quality, whereas aggressive and self-defeating humour may detract from relationship quality.

Keywords: Humour, Humour Styles Questionnaire, Relationship Satisfaction, Romantic Relationships, Dating Relationships.

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Laughter and Love: The Role of Humour Styles in Dating Relationships

Humour is a social phenomenon that can influence interpersonal relationships in a variety of positive (e.g., Apte, 1985; Hay, 2000; Shiota, 2004) and negative ways (e.g., Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003; Spradley & Mann, 1975; Terrion & Ashforth, 2002). An obvious benefit of humour is the pleasurable feelings that individuals experience when sharing humorous experiences with a close others. Indeed, Apter (1982) believes that humour is a playful activity that can be enjoyed for its own sake. When social relationships are characterized by pleasurable experiences these relationships may be experienced as more satisfying.

Humour also has a number of less obvious positive social functions. Shiota (2004) proposed that the shared experience of humour helps individuals establish and maintain close relationships, and increases feelings of attraction and commitment. Humour may also enhance interpersonal relationships by facilitating bonding, enhancing feelings of shared identity and interpersonal cohesion, and enabling people to express caring and affection (Fine, 1977; Hay, 2000; Kubie, 1994; Ziv, 1984).

Mulkay (1988) believes that humour can facilitate interpersonal communication. For instance, a dating couple can use humourous joking to communicate about a topic on which they disagree. Communications that involve the use of humour may be perceived as less threatening than serious direct discussions. Additionally, because humour is often ambiguous, when someone communicates something in a humourous way, they can retract the statement by telling others that they were only joking (Keltner, Young, Heerey, Oemig, & Monarch, 1998). Humour can also be used as an indirect method to gain

information about others and share information about ourselves (Kane, Suls, & Tedeschi, 1977).

Although many believe humour is a universally positive phenomenon, humour may also impact relationships in a negative manner. For instance humour can be used to maintain social norms, exert control over others, and maintain status hierarchies (Kane et al., 1977; Long & Graesser, 1988; Martineau, 1972). By using humour to communicate that certain beliefs, actions, or personality traits are undesirable or negatively perceived, individuals can coerce others into conforming to implied group norms (Long & Graesser, 1988). Humour can also be used to maintain status hierarchies. For example, Coser (1960) found that high status staff members frequently used humour to communicate critical messages to low status staff members. In addition, low status staff members tended to use humour in a self-deprecating manner and did not direct their humour towards high status staff members.

As demonstrated above, humour can serve a number of social functions. Thus, it is not surprising that many people believe that a sense of humour is an important component in romantic relationships. For instance, 90% of married individuals reported that humour contributes positively to their married lives (Ziv, 1988). Researchers have investigated associations between humour and a number of relationship relevant constructs, including interpersonal attraction (McGee & Shevlin, 2009), mate selection (Sprecher & Regan, 2002), relationship satisfaction (Rust & Goldstein, 1989), attachment styles (Kazarian & Martin, 2004), intimacy (Hampes, 1992), and conflict discussion (Campbell, Martin, & Ward, 2008). Overall, these studies have provided support for the view that humour plays a role (both positive and negative) in romantic relationships.

The present study was designed to investigate the association between humour styles and relationship satisfaction in dating relationships using a diary-based repeated-measures approach. In this introduction, I describe literature that has examined the association between humour and relationship formation and maintenance using a unidimensional conception of humour. Next, I review different approaches researchers have taken to classify the multidimensional concept of humour, including the humour styles framework (Martin et al., 2003). Then, I go on to discuss studies that have examined the association between interpersonal relationships and humour styles, using a variety of methodological approaches. Finally, I describe the current investigation and present the research questions that guided this thesis.

Research Using Unidimensional Conceptions of Humour

Until quite recently, most humour research has used a unidimensional conceptualization of humour, rather than distinguishing between different aspects or components of this construct. This has also been true of most past studies on humour in relationships (e.g., Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998; Hampes, 1992; McGee & Shevlin, 2009; Murstein & Brust, 1985; Sprecher & Regan, 2002). Although the conceptualization has been unidimensional, researchers have used several different approaches to measuring the construct of humour. For example, some studies refer to "sense of humour", asking people to indicate how important a sense of humour is in potential mates (Goodwin & Tang, 1991; Sprecher & Regan, 2002), or by describing potential relationship partners as possessing varying degrees of sense of humour (McGee & Shevlin, 2009). Other researchers have asked participants to rate their enjoyment of humorous stimuli (Priest & Thein, 2003), or to create humorous material (Ziv & Gadish,

1989). Some researchers have taken an observational approach, coding humour used in dyadic discussions (Cohan & Bradbury, 1997; Driver & Gottman, 2004; Gottman et al., 1998; Krokoff, 1991).

Research using unidimensional constructs of humour has focused on the association between humour and mate selection (McGee & Shevlin, 2009; Sprecher & Regan, 2002), and humour and relationship satisfaction (Cohan & Bradbury, 1997; Driver & Gottman, 2004; Gottman et al., 1998; Krokoff, 1991).

Humour and Mate Selection.

Humour may influence romantic relationships in a number of ways. In the early stages of relationship formation, humour may enhance attraction to romantic partners. Across a wide range of cultures, a sense of humour is seen as one of the most desirable characteristics in a prospective mate (Daniel, O'Brien, McCabe, & Quinter, 1985; Goodwin & Tang, 1991; Lippa, 2007). Humorous individuals are rated by peers as more socially attractive (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Booth-Butterfield, 1996), and individuals described as having a high sense of humour were rated significantly higher on attractiveness and suitability as relationship partners compared to those described as having an average or no sense of humour (McGee & Shevlin, 2009). Additionally, when single adults were asked about their preferences for romantic partners, they expressed a desire for kind, honest, and considerate partners with a strong sense of humour (Goodwin, 1990). Similarly, university students indicated a desire for kindness, expressiveness and openness, and a good sense of humour in a wide variety of relationships. When asked about romantic or sexual partners specifically, the students indicated a stronger preference for a good sense of humour (Sprecher & Regan, 2002).

A limitation of research examining sense of humour is that it is unclear what this concept refers to. Sense of humour is a poorly defined concept that has broadened over the years to include a variety of humour-related traits (Martin, 2007). It is likely that participants vary in what they consider a sense of humour to be. For instance, a person with a good sense of humour may refer to a cheerful person, a person who amuses others with humorous material, someone who is quick-witted and able to comprehend jokes, or someone who seeks out and enjoys humorous stimuli. Moreover, there is evidence that men and women may define sense of humour differently (Bressler, Martin, & Balshine, 2006).

The direction of the relationship between humour and attraction has also been debated. Some researchers believe that individuals' humour production causes others to perceive them as more attractive and suitable as relationship partners (Bressler et al., 2006; Miller, 2003). Research has found some support for this hypothesis. For example, research indicates that women value men who produce humour. When women were asked to indicate how successful a series of male "pick-up lines" would be, women rated pick-up lines containing humour as more likely to be successful (Cooper, O'Donnell, Caryl, Morrison, & Bale, 2007). Moreover, when university students were shown photographs of either attractive or unattractive people who had supposedly created humorous or nonhumorous autobiographical statements, the results indicated that women viewing men chose the humorous individuals as more desirable relationship partners (Bressler & Balshine, 2006). Finally, Lundy, Tan, & Cunningham (1998) manipulated the humour levels and physical attractiveness of hypothetical relationship partners and asked undergraduate students to rate their desirability as relationship partners. The results

indicated that the self-deprecating humour employed in the study enhanced the desirability of physically attractive people for committed romantic relationships, but did not increase attraction to individuals with low physical attractiveness. Unfortunately, this study only examined self-deprecating humour. Therefore, it is unclear whether this effect would be found with other forms of humour (e.g., silly behaviour, aggressive teasing, amusing anecdotes, etc.).

Conversely, other researchers believe that attraction leads to increased humour production and appreciation, and there is also some support for this hypothesis. In a series of studies designed to explore whether humour leads to attraction or attraction leads to humour, men and women were found to be more likely to initiate humour, respond positively to humour, and consider potential partners to be funny when they were already attracted to the potential partners (Li, Griskevicius, Durante, Pasisz, & Aumer, 2009). These studies suggest that humour does not lead to attraction, but that individuals engage in and respond more positively to humour when they are already attracted to potential romantic partners. The direction of causality in this relationship remains an unanswered question.

Another avenue for humour to influence attraction and mate selection is the similarity of two people's sense of humour. The similarity-attraction hypothesis posits that people tend to prefer romantic relationship partners who are similar to them on a number of constructs, including age, education, socioeconomic status, and personality (Vandenberg, 1972). Although many believe that a shared sense of humour is an important component of a successful relationship, research on humour similarity has yielded conflicting results. In an early study, dating couples who gave similar funniness

ratings of humour materials indicated higher degrees of loving, liking, and intent to marry than did those who showed differences in humour preferences (Murstein & Brust, 1985). Conversely, a more recent study conducted with married couples found moderate agreement in spouses' humour appreciation but there was no relationship between couples' similarity of humour appreciation and their levels of marital satisfaction (Priest & Thein, 2003). These findings have been replicated in a recent study which demonstrated that although there was similarity in partners' sense of humour, the degree of similarity was unrelated to relationship quality (Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2010).

Overall, humour appears to play a role in the early stages of romantic relationships. People state a preference for partners with a keen sense of humour (Sprecher & Regan, 2002) and the production and appreciation of humour has been shown to influence romantic attraction (Bressler et al., 2006; Li et al., 2009; McGee & Shevlin, 2009). However, there are a number of limitations to this body of research. First, how humour is conceptualized varies among these studies. Research in which participants are asked to rate the importance of potential mates' sense of humour is limited by the fact that sense of humour is a vague concept that can refer to a number of personality traits. This approach to examining humour may be overly inclusive. Conversely, another study took a narrow approach to the conceptualization of humour, including only self-deprecating humour (Lundy et al., 1998). Because the conceptualization of humour varies between studies, it is difficult to generalize results. Second, the direction of the association between sense of humour and attraction is ambiguous; does humour enhance attraction or does attraction enhance humour? Finally, the majority of experimental studies on humour and attraction ask participants to rate hypothetical relationship partners

on attractiveness based on photographs and autobiographical statements. It is unclear if the results obtained in these studies would generalize outside of the lab. For instance, is humour use in face-to-face conversations associated with attraction?

Humour and Relationship Satisfaction in Dating and Marriage.

The role of humour has also been investigated in established dating relationships and marriages. Most married couples believe that humour contributes positively to their romantic relationships, increasing feelings of intimacy and cohesion (Ziv, 1988). Moreover, individuals' relationship satisfaction is consistently related to positive perceptions of their partners' humour. In other words, people who are satisfied with their relationships tend to appreciate their partners' sense of humour (Ziv & Gadish, 1989), whereas people who are dissatisfied with their relationships tend to dislike their partners' sense of humour (Rust & Goldstein, 1989). However, the direction of causality is unclear. For instance, it is possible that people are satisfied with their relationships partially because they appreciate their partners' humour. Conversely, people may appreciate their partners' humour partly because they are satisfied with their relationships.

Humour has also been linked to a number of other positive relational processes, such as increased intimacy, passion, and commitment. In undergraduate students, higher levels of intimacy were associated with higher levels of humour (Hampes, 1992). Among married and cohabitating couples, when male partners were high on humour production, women reported higher levels of intimacy, passion, commitment, and love in their relationships (Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2010). Again, due to the correlational design of these studies, the direction of causality is unclear.

Research conducted by John Gottman and his colleagues has examined the role of humour in conflict situations using an observational methodology called the Specific Affect Coding System (SPAFF; Gottman, 1994). During conflict discussions, the ability to demonstrate positive affect (including humour) toward one's partner has been found to be an important factor in marital relationship persistence and satisfaction. In a longitudinal study of newlyweds, the only variable that predicted both marital persistence and happiness after six years of marriage was the amount of positive affect demonstrated during conflict discussions (Gottman et al., 1998). Humour use during conflict discussions has also been linked to wives' affection levels (Driver & Gottman, 2004) and satisfied couples tend to show higher levels of humour and laughter during problem discussions compared to dissatisfied couples (Carstensen, Gottman, & Levenson, 1995; Gottman, 1994).

Although humour has been linked to many positive relational processes, it may not always be beneficial to relationships. In an observational study of newlyweds, when spouses reported a high number of stressful life events, husbands' humour use during conflict discussions was predictive of separation or divorce 18 months later (Cohan & Bradbury, 1997). Depending on the context of the situation, humour use during conflict discussion can be associated with positive (Driver & Gottman, 2004) or negative relationship outcomes (Cohan & Bradbury, 1997).

In sum, research supports the widely held belief that humour plays a role in both the formation and maintenance of romantic relationships. People desire partners with a good sense of humour (Goodwin & Tang, 1991) and are more attracted to humorous individuals (Bressler et al., 2006). In established relationships, partners tend to exhibit

similar humour appreciation (Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2010) and individuals with higher levels of relationship satisfaction report greater appreciation of their partners' humour. Moreover, humour has been found to play a role in a number of positive relational processes (Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2010).

It is important to note the limitations of research using a unidimensional perspective of humour. Sense of humour can refer to a number of traits (e.g., production versus appreciation of humour) and humour can be used in many different ways. For example, though research demonstrated that self-deprecating humour enhanced the attractiveness of physically attractive people (Lundy et al., 1998), we cannot generalize these results to encompass all manifestations of humour. There are similar limitations in observational research. For instance, studies that have used the SPAFF only indicated that humour occurred if both partners exhibited joy and amusement in response to benevolent statements or gestures. Therefore, a joke that was poorly received would not be coded as humour, nor would an aggressive, yet humorous remark. Methodologies that do not distinguish between different types of humour may oversimplify, exaggerate, or diminish the relationship between humour and relationship-relevant variables.

Distinguishing Different Types of Humour in Relationships

In recent years, several researchers have suggested that, rather than conceptualizing humour as a unidimensional construct, it is important to distinguish between different types of humour that can be used in relationships.

Approaches to Classifying Types of Humour.

Researchers have taken a number of approaches to distinguish between different types of humour. While unidimensional conceptions of humour tend to look at benevolent

forms of humour, several researchers have identified negative forms of humour used in relationships (Bippus, 2000; de Koning & Weiss, 2002; Krokoff, 1991; Martin et al., 2003). In open-ended interviews, 12% of married individuals described negative aspects of humour in their relationships. Negative aspects of humour included using humour to avoid facing problems and aggressive humour that ridiculed others (Hall & Sereno, 2010; Ziv, 1988). Research has demonstrated that individuals who are dissatisfied with their relationships are more likely to use hostile humour to joke about their partners in a negative way, whereas satisfied couples are more likely to use benign forms of humour (Alberts, Yoshimura, Rabby, & Loschiavo, 2005). Similarly, members of satisfied couples were found to tease each other in more prosocial ways than less satisfied couples (Keltner et al., 1998).

In their review of the literature, Butzer and Kuiper (2008) identified three styles of humour used in romantic relationships: *Positive humour*, *negative humour*, and *avoiding humour* (used to reduce or avoid conflict). In their study, university students involved in dating relationships read vignettes describing either a pleasant situation or a conflict situation with their partners. Then they were asked to indicate how much they would use positive, negative, and avoiding humour in a discussion with their partners. They also completed a measure of their relationship satisfaction. Individuals who were satisfied with their relationships reported that they would use more positive humour, and less negative and avoiding humour in both the pleasant and conflict conditions. Moreover, highly satisfied individuals actually used less negative humour in conflict situations than in pleasant situations. Conversely, individuals who were less satisfied with their

relationships reported higher usage of negative humour in both conflict and pleasant situations.

De Koning and Weiss (2002) also distinguished between different types of humour when they developed the Relational Humour Inventory (RHI). This scale measures *positive humour*, *negative humour*, *instrumental humour* (used to reduce tension and negative affect), and *couple humour* (e.g., private jokes). Preliminary research has been conducted using the RHI. Positive humour and couple humour were found to be related to increased intimacy and satisfaction, whereas negative humour and instrumental humour were associated with demand-withdrawal, a maladaptive interaction pattern in which one member of a couple attempts to advance a conflict while the other member attempts to avoid the conflict (de Koning & Weiss, 2002; Weger, 2005).

The Humour Styles Framework.

Recently, researchers have begun to examine the associations between humour and psychosocial well-being using the framework of the Humour Styles Questionnaire (HSQ; Martin et al., 2003). The humour styles framework posits four styles of humour that people spontaneously use in their daily lives. Two styles (*affiliative* and *self-enhancing humour*) are believed to be beneficial or adaptive, whereas two styles (*aggressive* and *self-defeating humour*) are thought to be detrimental or maladaptive. Affiliative and aggressive humour are conceptualized as interpersonal styles of humour that are typically used in social contexts. Conversely, self-enhancing and self-defeating humour are more intrapersonal in nature.

Affiliative humour refers to the tendency to engage in non-hostile humour to enhance relationships. It includes funny stories and jokes, witty remarks, and amusing

physical behaviour. Affiliative humour is thought to enhance interpersonal relationships by promoting closeness and reducing interpersonal tensions. Self-enhancing humour refers to the tendency to use humour to cope with unpleasant or stressful situations, to maintain a humorous outlook on life, and to use humour as an emotion-regulation mechanism. Greater use of self-enhancing humour is associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and negative affect, and higher levels of self-esteem and positive affect (Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, & Kirsh, 2004).

Aggressive humour refers to humour used to criticise or manipulate others, such as sarcasm, teasing, disparaging, and offensive humour, and the expression of socially inappropriate humour (e.g., sexist or racist jokes). People who report using a high degree of aggressive humour may be attempting to enhance themselves at the expense of others. Finally, self-defeating humour refers to excessively self-disparaging humour, amusing others at one's own expense, and laughing with others when one is being ridiculed. Self-defeating humour can also be used as a defense mechanism, to avoid dealing with problems or to hide negative feelings. Individuals high on self-defeating humour may be attempting to win the recognition and approval of others at their own expense.

The Humour Styles Questionnaire is a well-validated self-report measure of the four humour styles that has been utilized in nearly 50 published studies. A considerable amount of research has shown that measures of the two adaptive humour styles are positively related to self-esteem, positive emotions, optimism, extraversion, social support, emotional intelligence, social competence, and intimacy; and negatively related to depression and anxiety (Kazarian & Martin, 2004; Martin et al., 2003; Martin, 2007; Yip & Martin, 2006). Affiliative humour tends to be more strongly related to relationship

variables (e.g., social support, intimacy), whereas self-enhancing humour is more strongly related to emotional well-being variables, such as self-esteem and optimism (Martin et al., 2003).

Aggressive humour has been shown to be related to higher levels of neuroticism, hostility, and aggression and lower levels of emotional intelligence, social competence, and relationship satisfaction (Kazarian & Martin, 2004; Martin et al., 2003; Martin, 2007; Yip & Martin, 2006). Finally, self-defeating humour is associated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, hostility, neuroticism, and psychological symptoms, and lower levels of self-esteem, psychological well-being, social support, emotional intelligence, social competence, and relationship satisfaction (Kazarian & Martin, 2004; Martin et al., 2003; Martin, 2007; Yip & Martin, 2006). Because affiliative and aggressive humour are interpersonal in nature, these two humour styles are most relevant to the study of relationships.

Previous Studies of Humour Styles and Relationships

A few studies have investigated relationships using the humour styles framework. Some research has looked at dating relationships and some research has examined relationships with friends or "close others". Different methodological approaches have also been taken. Researchers have employed a simple correlational methodology using the original trait version of the HSQ as the measure of humour styles, observational procedures that code for humour styles, and diary approaches that assess humour use over a period of time. Each methodological approach has certain strengths and weaknesses.

Correlational Research.

In a Masters study conducted at the University of Western Ontario, Jennie Ward (2004) investigated the link between humour styles and friendship quality. To examine friendship quality, Ward used a modified version of the Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale (PANQ) to distinguish between satisfaction and dissatisfaction with friendships.

Fincham and Linfield (1997), the creators of the PANQ, believe that relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction are relatively independent constructs. In other words, relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not necessarily negatively correlated in a given relationship. Indeed, these researchers demonstrated that a two-dimensional model of relationship satisfaction that included both satisfaction and dissatisfaction provided a better fit for couples' data than a one-dimensional model of relationship satisfaction.

In her Masters research, Ward (2004) found that affiliative humour was associated with relationship satisfaction, whereas aggressive humour was associated with relationship dissatisfaction. Thus, the associations between humour styles and relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction were independent and not negatively correlated. For example, greater affiliative humour was related to higher relationship satisfaction, but not to lower relationship dissatisfaction. The use of the PANQ enabled Ward (2004) to ascertain more subtle associations between humour styles and relationship satisfaction than a unidimensional measure of relationship satisfaction would have allowed.

A recent study conducted by Cann and colleagues (Cann, Zapata, & Davis, 2011) at the University of North Carolina investigated whether humour styles are related to

relationship satisfaction among dating couples. Each member of the couple was asked to complete the original trait version of the HSQ for themselves and for their perception of their partners' humour. Participants also completed a unidimensional measure of relationship satisfaction. The results indicated that participants' perceptions of their partners' humour styles were the best predictors of relationship satisfaction. Partners' self-reported humour styles were not associated with participants' relationship satisfaction and participants' self-reported humour styles were not related to their own relationship satisfaction (Cann et al., 2011).

Puhlik-Doris (2004) examined the relationship between humour styles, relationship satisfaction, and relationship persistence among undergraduate dating couples. In her study, participants completed the original trait-version of the HSQ to assess their overall humour use, a modified version of the HSQ to rate their perceptions of their partners' humour styles, a relationship survey that asked participants to predict how long they expected their relationships to last, a unidimensional measure of relationship satisfaction, and the Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale (PANQ; Fincham & Linfield, 1997). Participants' partners also completed the HSQ and the PANQ. Finally, participants were contacted approximately five months after the initial session and asked whether they were still in the same dating relationships.

Correlational analyses indicated that participants' own use of affiliative and self-enhancing humour was related to higher levels of relationship satisfaction with their dating relationships. Conversely, aggressive humour was related to higher levels of relationship dissatisfaction. Partners' perceived humour styles also played a role in relationship satisfaction. When participants perceived their partner as high on affiliative

humour, participants were more satisfied with their relationships. When partners were perceived as low on affiliative and self-enhancing humour, participants reported greater levels of dissatisfaction. Moreover, when partners were perceived as using high levels of aggressive humour, participants reported higher levels of relationship dissatisfaction.

Due to the correlational design of this study, the direction of these effects is unclear. For example, did positive humour styles lead to greater relationship satisfaction, or did greater relationship satisfaction lead to more positive humour use?

Interestingly, there were no significant correlations between participants' self-reported humour styles and their partners' ratings of relationship satisfaction or dissatisfaction. One possible explanation for this lack of association is that the original trait version of the HSQ used in this study was too general to identify relationship-focused outcomes. The original HSQ measures humour styles across multiple relationships and across time. For example, an individual may be low on aggressive humour in general, and therefore obtain a low score on the aggressive humour scale of the HSQ, but if this individual frequently teases his or her partner in an aggressive way, one would expect to find an association between a more relationship-focused measure of humour styles and relationship satisfaction. Thus, a relationship-focused measure of humour styles may identify a link between one partner's humour styles and the other partner's relationship satisfaction.

Puhlik-Doris (2004) also investigated whether humour styles play a role in relationship persistence. With regard to participants' initial predictions of how long their relationships would last, those who perceived their partners as using a high degree of self-defeating humour were less likely to predict both being together one year later and getting

married in the future. Thus, self-defeating humour appears to have a negative impact on relationships. Individuals may find their partners' use of self-defeating humour aversive. Alternatively, individuals may be influenced by their partners' self-defeating humour, such that they begin to agree with their partners' self-defeating remarks.

However, individuals' perceptions of their partners' self-defeating humour were not related to break up at follow-up. However, higher scores on aggressive humour predicted break-up. Contrary to the researcher's expectations, high levels of affiliative humour also predicted break-up (Puhlik-Doris, 2004). This finding is quite surprising. One would expect that individuals who engage in the style of humour which is thought to enhance relationships would experience greater relationship satisfaction and be less likely to experience relationship dissolution.

One possible explanation for this counter-intuitive finding is that individuals who engage in a high degree of affiliative humour are viewed as more attractive relationship partners (McGee & Shevlin, 2009; Wanzer et al., 1996) and may be more likely to leave their relationships because they believe they could find other relationships that meet their needs. The Investment Model (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) provides a conceptual framework for understanding these dynamics. This model posits that commitment to a relationship is influenced by relationship satisfaction, investment in the relationship (i.e., resources linked to the relationship), and quality of alternatives. Quality of alternatives refers to the degree to which individuals' needs could be fulfilled outside of their current relationships. For example, if individuals feel that other partners could meet their needs for intimacy and companionship better than their current partners, their quality of alternatives would be high. The Investment Model implies that if individuals perceive

their quality of alternatives as high, they will be less committed to their relationships and may be more likely to leave their current relationships. If individuals are high in affiliative humour, they may be seen as especially attractive mates, and may experience a high quality of alternatives as a result. Therefore, these individuals may be less committed to their relationships and more likely to experience relationship dissolution. This could explain why previous research has demonstrated that individuals who use of high degree of affiliative humour are more likely to break up (Puhlik-Doris, 2004).

Although Puhlik-Doris (2004) found that high levels of affiliative humour were indicative of break-up among dating couples, another study that also used the original trait version of the HSQ found that high levels of affiliative humour were related to a greater likelihood of remaining married versus getting divorced (Saroglou, Lacour, & Emeure, 2010). Therefore, it is unclear how affiliative humour relates to relationship persistence. Further research is needed to examining the association between affiliative humour and relationship persistence. One purpose of the present study is to explore this issue.

In sum, correlational studies have demonstrated that humour styles play a role in relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as well as relationship persistence. However, research conducted with a one-dimensional measure of relationship satisfaction indicated that the perception of partners' humour is most relevant to relationship satisfaction, whereas research conducted with a two-dimensional conception of relationship satisfaction suggested that both participants' own humour styles and their perception of their partners' humour styles were relevant to relationship satisfaction. The relative contribution of individuals' own humour styles and their perceptions of their partners'

humour styles remains unclear. Because Cann and colleagues (2011) published their study after this thesis was designed, I do not address this question.

There are a number of limitations to this research. First, these correlational studies examined humour styles using the original trait version of the HSQ. Thus, the participants' humour styles reflected how they used humour across a wide variety of relationships and situations. People may use humour differently depending on who they are interacting with. For instance, a shy person who uses no humour at work may enjoy telling silly jokes to his or her partner. Using a relationship-focused measure of humour styles may result in stronger associations with relationship-relevant constructs. Second, as with all correlational studies, the direction of the demonstrated relationships is unclear. For instance, does aggressive humour lead to relationship dissatisfaction, or does relationship dissatisfaction cause individuals to use aggressive humour? Lastly, the cross-sectional design of these studies does not enable one to examine change over time. A study that utilizes repeated measures of relationship satisfaction and relationship-focused humour styles would allow researchers to determine if changes in relationship satisfaction are concurrent with changes in humour styles.

Observational Research.

Campbell, Martin, and Ward (2008) used an observational methodology to examine dating couples' spontaneous use of affiliative and aggressive humour during conflict discussions. The couples, who were university students, completed a series of questionnaires about their dating relationships, themselves, and their partners. At a later date, they returned to the lab to participate in seven minute videotaped discussions about recent unresolved conflicts. After the discussions, partners were separated and asked to

indicate their distress levels, how close they felt to their partners, and how well they thought their conflicts had been resolved. Trained coders rated the occurrence of affiliative and aggressive humour during the conflict discussions. The coders also rated how funny each partner was, confirming the notion that aggressive humour, though maladaptive, is often perceived by others as funny.

The results were analyzed using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) and the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Kashy & Kenny, 2000). These data analytic techniques allowed the researchers to examine both actor and partner effects (Campbell & Kashy, 2002). For example, a participant's level of distress following the conflict discussion may be associated with his or her humour use during the discussion (an actor effect) but may also be influenced by his or her partner's use of humour during the discussion (a partner effect). Including partner effects allowed the researchers to examine the reciprocal influence that may occur between dating couples and control for variance in individuals' scores that could be associated with their partners' characteristics (Campbell et al., 2008).

The results indicated that individuals with higher relationship satisfaction had partners who used more affiliative and less aggressive humour during conflict discussions. Moreover, high levels of affiliative humour were associated with greater perceived conflict resolution and less self-reported distress following the discussion. Conversely, high levels of aggressive humour were related to lower levels of conflict resolution and higher levels of distress (Campbell et al., 2008).

A notable strength of Campbell and colleagues (2008) study was the observational methodology. Self-report measurements can be influenced by many variables, such as

desirability bias and inaccurate recall. Indeed, people tend to overestimate their sense of humour (Lefcourt & Martin, 1986). Because trained coders rated the occurrence of affiliative and aggressive humour, the researchers did not rely on self-reported humour styles. When observational studies demonstrate similar results as self-report studies, researchers can be more confident about conclusions drawn from self-report studies.

Of course, all studies have limitations. The time-limited nature of this laboratory study did not allow the researchers to examine a longer time frame. For instance, how does daily humour relate to relationship variables over time? Moreover, it is unclear if these results from the laboratory conflict discussions would hold true in different contexts. Would these results generalize to a couple's everyday interactions? A diary approach, where individuals complete measures of daily humour use and relationship relevant variables would allow researchers to look at how humour influences couples' relationships over time in their natural environments.

Diary Approach.

Two studies have examined the degree to which humour use was predictive of social interactions over time using daily diary methodology. Nezlek and Derks (2001) asked university students to complete descriptions of their social interactions for fourteen days, rating how enjoyable each interaction was, how close they felt to the other people present, and how confident they felt in their interactions. After participants completed the fourteen "daily diaries" or interaction records, they completed the Coping Humour Scale (CHS; Lefcourt & Martin, 1986). The CHS measures the use of humour to cope with unpleasant situations, a concept very similar to self-enhancing humour, as measured by the HSQ (Martin, 2007). Participants also completed measures of depression, loneliness,

social skills, and social anxiety. The results were analyzed using HLM and indicated that people who used higher levels of coping humour felt more confident and enjoyed their social interactions more over the two-week diary period (Nezlek & Derks, 2001).

Other researchers have used the diary approach to examine the associations between humour styles, positive and negative social interactions, and interpersonal competence during interactions with close others (e.g., friends, room-mates, parents) (Martin & Dutzac, 2004). Undergraduate students completed a series of paper and pencil questionnaires, including the original trait version of the HSQ, and measures of interpersonal competence, loneliness, and interpersonal anxiety. They were also asked to complete Internet-based daily diary records of their interactions with close others six times over a three-week period. For each daily diary, participants recorded the frequency of positive (e.g., doing enjoyable things together) and negative (e.g., disagreements) interactions with close others, the degree to which they gave and received empathy, and their overall positive and negative moods. The data were analyzed using HLM, which allowed for each individual's daily diaries to be nested within that person. Thus, the researchers could examine how participants' interactions and moods varied over time.

The results indicated that affiliative and self-enhancing humour were positively related to interpersonal competence. Self-enhancing humour was predictive of more positive social interactions, greater giving and receiving of empathy, and less negative mood. On the other hand, self-defeating humour was related to low levels of interpersonal competence and aggressive humour predicted less empathic interactions and more negative social interactions (Martin & Dutzac, 2004).

Overall, these two studies suggest that humour styles are related to a person's social interactions. More specifically, self-enhancing humour predicted more positive social interactions and self-defeating humour predicted more negative social interactions. Measures of positive and negative interactions offer an indication of the quality of interactions between partners. For instance, if a couple is constantly arguing, the quality of their interactions is likely poor. In addition to relationship satisfaction, researchers can utilize measurements of positive and negative interactions as outcome variables in the study of relationships. The present study examined both relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the frequency of positive and negative interactions as outcome variables.

Although daily diary studies offer many advantages to traditional self-report methodologies, there are some limitations to these two previous studies. First, neither study used a daily measure of humour styles. Second, Nezlek and Derks (2001) only looked at one form of humour (Coping Humor, which is similar to self-enhancing humour). Martin and Dutzac (2004) examined all four humour styles, but used the original trait version of HSQ that measures humour use across multiple relationships and time. Without daily measures of humour styles, one cannot examine how the daily use of humour styles impacts relationships over time. Moreover, the humour styles that participants use in general may not give a clear indication of how they use humour styles in their romantic relationships. Diary studies that include daily measures of humour styles that are specific to the romantic relationship would allow researchers to see how changes in humour styles relate to changes in relationship satisfaction over time.

In a study that focused on humour styles and coping with stress, Puhlik-Doris (2004) used a diary approach that measured daily use of humour styles. Participants were asked to complete a series of online diaries, twice a week over a three-week period. These diaries assessed their daily use of humour styles, their daily stress, and their positive and negative moods that day. This methodological approach allowed the researcher to determine that daily use of self-enhancing humour reduces the effects of stress across time. I adopted a similar methodology for the present investigation.

Current Investigation

As we have seen, past research has examined humour styles in relationships using correlational methods with the original trait version of the HSQ (e.g., Saroglou et al., 2010), an observational methodology that examined affiliative and aggressive humour (Campbell et al., 2008), and a daily diary study in which daily relationship satisfaction and relationship persistence were predicted from scores on the original trait version of the HSQ (Puhlik-Doris, 2004).

The current investigation is the first to utilize a diary methodology to examine how daily, relationship-focused humour styles impact dating relationships. Daily humour measures that are specific to participants' romantic relationships may play a more direct role in relationship satisfaction and persistence (i.e., separated versus still together at follow-up) than trait-level humour styles. Additionally, daily measures allowed me to track the associations between daily humour use in the relationship and daily relationship satisfaction, while simultaneously examining moderating effects of trait-level variables, such as attachment. Moreover, by using an approach similar to cross-lagged panel correlations, I was able to investigate the direction of the link between humour styles and

relationship satisfaction. In particular, by examining how humour styles at one data collection day predict relationship satisfaction at the next data collection day, and comparing this with the degree to which relationship satisfaction at one data collection day predicts humour styles on the next data collection day, I could determine whether there is a stronger evidence for a predictive link in one direction or the other.

Additionally, the inclusion of positive and negative interactions in the relationship adds to our understanding of the association between humour styles and relationship quality. For example, do positive daily humour styles predict positive daily interactions in the relationship?

In sum, the current thesis was designed to further explore the complex relationship between humour styles, relationship satisfaction, and relationship persistence. I examined how daily humour styles were associated with daily relationship satisfaction and investigated the direction of the association between humour styles and relationship satisfaction. I also examined the role of positive and negative interactions in romantic relationships and Investment Model variables.

In the present investigation, participants who were involved in a dating relationship for three or more months completed six online diaries. The online diaries assessed how participants used humour over the preceding three days with their partners using a modified version of the HSQ, relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and positive and negative interactions with their partners over the same time period.

Puhlik-Doris (2004) examined similar constructs. However, she used the original trait version of the HSQ instead of a relationship-focused measure of humour styles. Moreover, she only examined humour styles, positive and negative interactions, and

relationship satisfaction at one time, whereas I utilized a repeated-measures approach. Having multiple measurements allowed me to analyze the data using hierarchical linear modeling and examine how within-person changes in one variable are associated with within-person changes in another variable. I also included additional variables that may help explain the relationship between humour styles and relationship satisfaction.

Participants were also asked to complete the original trait version of the HSQ and the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998), which measured relationship satisfaction, commitment level, investment in the relationship, and quality of alternatives to the relationship. Moreover, participants were contacted approximately five months later to determine if they were still in the same dating relationships. Participants also provided the email addresses of their dating partners. Dating partners were contacted and asked to complete measures of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

In sum, the present investigation had a number of methodological strengths. First, the inclusion of a daily relationship-focused measure of humour styles allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how humour styles are associated with relationship satisfaction than previous studies that used the original trait version of the HSQ allowed. Second, the daily diary approach allowed me to use HLM to investigate changes in humour styles and relationship-relevant variables over time. Finally, time-lagged analyses enabled me to explore the direction of causality with respect to the associations between humour styles, relationship satisfaction, and positive and negative interactions in the relationship.

Hypotheses

Based on past research described in this introduction a number of research questions and hypotheses were tested in the present study.

Question 1. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles relate to daily relationship satisfaction?

I hypothesized that daily use of affiliative and self-enhancing humour in dating relationships would be positively related to daily relationship satisfaction and negatively related to daily relationship dissatisfaction. With regard to maladaptive humour styles, I predicted that the daily use of aggressive and self-defeating humour would be positively related to daily relationship dissatisfaction and negatively related to daily relationship satisfaction.

Question 2. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles predict relationship satisfaction or does relationship satisfaction predict daily relationship-focused humour styles?

This investigation was the first to examine this research question. Therefore, I made no specific predictions. To examine if humour styles predict relationship satisfaction, I conducted HLM analyses with relationship-focused humour styles from each data collection day, and relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction from subsequent data collection days. Conversely, to examine if relationship satisfaction predicts humour styles in the relationship, I conducted HLM analyses with relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction at each data collection day and relationship-focused humour styles from subsequent data collection days.

Question 3. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles relate to positive and negative interactions in the relationship?

I predicted that affiliative and self-enhancing humour would be associated with positive interactions in the relationship and that aggressive and self-defeating humour would be associated with negative interactions in the relationship.

Question 4. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles predict positive and negative interactions or do positive and negative interactions predict daily relationship-focused humour styles?

This investigation was the first to examine this research question. Therefore, I made no specific predictions. I used a methodological approach similar to that described in Question 2 to examine this research question.

Question 5. Do participants' humour styles relate to their partners' relationship satisfaction?

I posited that participants' daily relationship-focused levels of affiliative and self-enhancing humour would be positively related to relationship satisfaction among partners. Conversely, participants' relationship-focused daily levels of aggressive and self-defeating humour would be related to relationship dissatisfaction among partners.

Question 6. Do humour styles play a role in relationship persistence?

In part, this study was designed to replicate and explore the finding that individuals who used higher levels of affiliative humour were more likely to break up than their counterparts (Puhlik-Doris, 2004). I hypothesized that high levels of affiliative, aggressive, and self-defeating humour would predict break-up. On the other hand, self-

enhancing humour should have a negative relationship with break-up, such that those high in self-enhancing humour are less likely to break up than their counterparts.

Question 7. Does Rusbult's (1998) Investment Model help to explain the relationship between humour styles, relationship satisfaction, and relationship persistence?

I expected to find an association between affiliative humour and quality of alternatives, such that individuals high on affiliative humour would perceive more alternatives to their relationships. Moreover, I predicted that when individuals were high on both affiliative humour and quality of alternatives, they would be more likely to break up than their counterparts. Conversely, I expected that individuals high on self-defeating humour would perceive low levels of alternatives to their relationships. Exploratory analyses were also conducted to investigate how commitment and investment size relate to daily humour styles and relationship satisfaction.

Question 8. Do trait-level humour styles predict the corresponding daily relationship-focused humour styles?

I predicted that daily levels of relationship-focused humour styles would be strongly linked to the corresponding trait-level humour styles. For instance, people who reported engaging in high levels of affiliative humour overall (on the original trait version of the HSQ) should have engaged in high levels of affiliative humour with their partners (on the online diaries). Such findings would provide additional support for the predictive validity of the HSQ.

Method

Participants

A total of 139 undergraduates (36 men and 103 women) enrolled in the Introductory Psychology Subject Pool at the University of Western Ontario volunteered to participate in the present study. Participants received two course credits for their participation, one after they completed Part 1 of the study and a second one after they completed Part 2. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 25 years ($M = 18.63$, $SD = 1.35$). All participants were involved in heterosexual dating relationships of three or more months at the beginning of the study. The average length of dating relationships was 18.75 months ($SD = 15.39$).

The sample was primarily comprised of European-Canadians (71.2%), Asian-Canadians (16.5%), and South Asian-Canadians (5.0%). English was the first language of 81.3% of participants. Participants for whom English was not their first language had been speaking English for an average of 10.92 years ($SD = 5.01$).

Participants' dating partners were also invited to participate in the study. A total of 72 dating partners (53 men and 19 women) participated.

A total of 136 participants (35 men and 101 women) completed Part 2. Follow-up responses were obtained from 114 participants (33 men and 81 women).

Materials

Trait-Level Variables.

Demographic Questionnaire. This questionnaire (see Appendix F) asked the participant to indicate his or her email address, age in years, gender, ethnicity, whether he or she were born in Canada, and how many years he or she had lived in Canada.

Participants indicated whether English was their first language and how long they had been speaking English. Participants also supplied the first names, genders, and email addresses of their dating partners, and indicated how long they had been in their current dating relationships.

Humour Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) This questionnaire created by Martin et al., (2003) consists of four 8-item scales that assess different styles of humour (i.e., affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating). Examples of items include “I laugh and joke a lot with my friends” (affiliative humour), “If I am feeling depressed I can usually cheer myself up with humour” (self-enhancing humour), “If I don’t like someone, I often use humour or teasing to put them down” (aggressive humour), and “I let people laugh at me or make fun of me more than I should” (self-defeating humour). Participants are asked to indicate their agreement with each statement on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally disagree*, 7 = *totally agree*). In previous research, alpha coefficients for the four scales ranged from .77 to .81 (Martin et al., 2003). In the present study, the alpha coefficients for the four scales ranged from .76 to .85.

Validation support for the HSQ is provided by studies demonstrating theoretically meaningful relationships between variables. For instance, affiliative and self-enhancing humour are positively related to self-esteem, positive emotions, optimism, social support, and intimacy. Moreover, these two humour styles are negatively related to depression and anxiety. In contrast, aggressive humour is positively related to measures of aggression and hostility, and negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. Self-defeating humour is positively related to depression, anxiety, hostility, and psychiatric

symptoms, and negatively related to self-esteem, psychological well-being, social support, and relationship satisfaction (Martin, 2007).

Investment Model Scale (IMS) This self-report questionnaire created by Rusbult et al. (1998) is comprised of four subscales assessing the four dimensions in Rusbult's Investment Model: commitment, relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives to the relationship, and investment size. Items for each construct and are assessed on a 9-point scale (0 = *do not agree at all*, 8 = *agree completely*). The four subscales are summed to obtain total scores for each of the four constructs. Previous research using principal component analyses supports the presence of four factors and coefficient alphas ranging from .82 to .95 (Rusbult et al., 1998). In the current study, internal consistency coefficients ranged from .74 to .89.

Day-Level Variables.

Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire (DHSQ). Puhlik-Doris (2004) modified the HSQ to use in a daily diary study. I modified her scale to make the questions more specific to dating relationships (see Appendix H). The DHSQ measured participants' use of the four humour styles with their dating partners (or by themselves) during the past three days. Each of the four scales was comprised of three items. Examples of items include, "I told my boyfriend/girlfriend a joke or said something funny to make him/her laugh" (affiliative humour), "I teased my boyfriend/girlfriend when he/she made a mistake (aggressive humour), "I tried to make my boyfriend/girlfriend like or accept me more by saying something funny about my own weaknesses, blunders, or faults" (self-defeating humour), and "I was amused by something funny when I was all by myself" (self-enhancing humour). Participants are asked to indicate how frequently they engaged

in these forms of humour during the past three days via a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *more than five times*). Validation support for the modified HSQ is provided by theoretically meaningful relationships between variables. For example, in previous research self-enhancing humour was related to positive mood, self-defeating humour was related to negative mood, and affiliative humour was related to relationship well-being (Puhlik-Doris, 2004). In past research, internal consistency for the modified HSQ ranged from .70 to .79 (Puhlik-Doris, 2004).

Reliability estimates for the daily measures in the current sample were calculated in HLM and represent the ratio of true to total variance of an effect (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). The reliabilities of the intercepts for affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humour were all high, at .91, .91, .93, and .94, respectively.

Daily Interactions with Dating Partner. This self-report checklist was created for the current study to assess the occurrence of positive and negative interactions in participants dating relationships (see Appendix G). The checklist is based on a measure created by Dutrizac (2005). Dutrizac adapted 17 items (8 positive and 9 negative) from Maybery's measures of positive and negative interactions (Maybery & Graham, 2001; Maybery, 2003a; Maybery, 2003b). I modified Dutrizac's measure to be more specific to dating relationships by removing less relevant items, adding important interactions, and modifying the wording. In the current study, participants indicated whether a specific had event happened in the past three day in their interactions with their dating partners. The checklist includes 14 positive statements (e.g., "I said something that made my partner feel loved") and 7 negative statements (e.g., "I criticized my partner"). In the present

study the reliability estimates for the intercepts of positive and negative interactions were .88 and .84, respectively.

Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale (PANQ). This six item self-report scale was designed by Fincham and Linfield (1997) to independently assess individuals' relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction. For the present study, I modified this scale so it would apply to dating couples, rather than married couples (see Appendix I). The scale asks participants to consider positive and negative dimensions of their relationships separately. Participants are asked to rate how they feel about their relationships or partners on a 10-point scale. For the positive dimensions, ratings range from *not at all positive* to *extremely positive*. For the negative dimensions, ratings range from *not at all negative* to *extremely negative*. An example of a positive item is "Considering only the positive feelings you have towards this person at this moment, and ignoring the negative feelings, evaluate how positive these feelings are". An example of a negative item is "Considering only the bad feelings you have about your relationship with this person at this moment, and ignoring the good feelings, evaluate how bad these feelings are". Previous research using confirmatory factor analyses supports the relative independence of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the PANQ correlates as expected with other measures of relationship satisfaction (Fincham & Linfield, 1997). In the previous research, internal consistency coefficients for relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction were .89 and .90, respectively (Fincham & Linfield, 1997). In the current study, the reliability estimates for the intercepts of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction were .93 and .94, respectively.

Procedure

This study consisted of two parts. Part 1 was comprised of a series of self-report measures administered in a group testing session, and Part 2 consisted of six online diaries.

During Part 1, participants completed a battery of self-report measures in groups of 1 to 8. Each participant was welcomed and introduced to the study by one of two female researchers and was provided with an information sheet which outlined the testing procedures. The researchers obtained informed consent before participants began the study. With the exception of the demographic questionnaire, which was always presented first, participants received the following measures in randomized order: PANQ, HSQ, DHSQ, Daily Interactions with Dating Partner, and the IMS. Participants completed the questionnaires within one hour. Following completion of the questionnaires, the researcher provided participants with a debriefing sheet and thanked them for their participation.

During Part 1, participants were asked to provide their own email addresses and the email addresses of their dating partner. Partners of participants were sent emails that explained the current study and were invited to participate in an online questionnaire (the PANQ). Partners of participants consented to participate in the online questionnaire by submitting their responses. After partners completed the questionnaire, they received brief debriefing information and were thanked for their participation.

Part 2 consisted of a series of six brief online diaries completed over a time span of 23 to 77 days ($M = 33$ days, $SD = 9.09$ days), with a minimum of three days between each diary. The online diaries consisted of the Daily Interactions with Dating Partners, the

DHSQ, and the PANQ. These three questionnaires were also administered during Part 1, increasing the total number of repeated-measures data collection points to seven. Three to four days after their participation in Part 1, participants received an email that contained a link to complete the first online diary over a secure website. Participants consented to each of the six online diaries by submitting their responses. If participants did not complete their online diaries, they received one email reminder asking them to do so. Three to four days after submitting an online diary, participants received another email asking them to complete the next diary. After submitting the sixth diary, participants were emailed detailed feedback sheets, thanked for their participation, and given their second research credits.

I emailed participants approximately five months ($M = 5.25$ months; $SD = 1.65$ months) after their participation in Part 1, asking them to respond “yes” or “no” as to whether they were still in dating relationships with their partner. A total of 114 participants responded (33 men and 81 women).

Results

Overview of Analyses

My data set contained measures at two levels, the day-level (Level 1) and the trait-level (Level 2). I analyzed my data using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Day-level data were analyzed as nested within persons. At the day-level, random coefficient model analyses examined within-person relations between variables concerning daily relationship-focused humour styles, relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and positive and negative interactions in the relationship. I also examined relations between day-level variables (e.g., daily humour styles) and trait-

level variables (e.g., commitment) with intercept-as-outcome models. Within-person relationships were modeled at Level 1 and individual differences in within-person relations were modeled at Level 2.

I estimated models using restricted maximum likelihood (REML) procedures and centred all continuous predictors around the grand mean. Following the suggestion of Nezlek (2007), I removed nonsignificant random error terms associated with slopes from the models. Although some slopes did not vary randomly (i.e., the random error terms associated with the slopes were nonsignificant), they can still vary without an associated random error term. This is referred to as non-random variation (Nezlek, 2007).

Descriptive Statistics

I utilized HLM to calculate descriptive statistics for the daily measures. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the day-level variables averaged across the diary completion period. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of each diary day for the day-level variables. Participants' reports of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction were negatively correlated, $r = -.39, p < .001$. Participants reports of positive and negative interactions with their dating partners were positively correlated, $r = .13, p < .001$.

I used standard procedures to calculate descriptive statistics for the trait-level variables. Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations for the trait-level measures. These means and standard deviations are comparable to those found in previous research using these measures (e.g., Martin et al., 2003; Martin & Dutrizac, 2004; Puhlik-Doris, 2004). The relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction of participants' partners was negatively correlated, $r = -.54, p < .001$.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Day-Level Measures Averaged Across Diary Completion Period

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
DHSQ-Affiliative	11.83	3.22
DHSQ-Self-enhancing	8.58	2.99
DHSQ-Aggressive	6.40	2.80
DHSQ-Self-defeating	5.50	2.75
PANQ-Satisfaction	26.16	4.96
PANQ-Dissatisfaction	9.72	6.48
Positive Interactions	9.83	3.44
Negative Interactions	1.39	1.34

Note. DSHQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire, PANQ = Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Measures in Each Online Diary Day

Measures	Diary Day						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
DHSQ-AF	12.61 (2.32)	12.30 (2.69)	11.65 (3.24)	11.77 (3.66)	11.57 (3.29)	11.46 (3.54)	11.46 (3.47)
DHSQ-SE	9.32 (2.64)	9.06 (2.78)	8.59 (2.92)	8.46 (3.10)	8.19 (3.09)	8.23 (3.17)	8.15 (3.10)
DHSQ-AG	6.89 (2.54)	6.61 (2.66)	6.41 (2.93)	6.28 (2.77)	6.22 (2.98)	6.19 (2.80)	6.22 (2.93)
DHSQ-SD	5.61 (2.44)	5.74 (2.78)	5.46 (2.68)	5.59 (2.98)	5.53 (2.92)	5.28 (2.77)	5.28 (2.73)
PANQ-SAT	27.40 (2.82)	26.36 (4.74)	25.93 (5.47)	25.58 (5.56)	25.94 (4.92)	25.87 (5.22)	26.00 (5.35)
PANQ-DIS	11.63 (5.86)	9.90 (5.93)	10.23 (6.70)	9.75 (6.79)	9.22 (6.71)	8.60 (6.38)	8.66 (6.57)
POS-INT	10.26 (2.62)	10.22 (3.02)	9.84 (3.37)	9.79 (3.70)	9.39 (3.51)	9.49 (3.88)	9.75 (3.75)
NEG-INT	1.28 (1.21)	1.40 (1.23)	1.35 (1.33)	1.52 (1.42)	1.32 (1.39)	1.44 (1.41)	1.41 (1.40)

Note. DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire, AF = Affiliative, SE = Self-enhancing, AG = Aggressive, SD = Self-defeating, PANQ = Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale, SAT = Relationship Satisfaction, DIS = Relationship Dissatisfaction, POS-INT = Positive Interactions, NEG-INT = Negative Interactions.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Trait-Level Measures

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
HSQ-Affiliative	47.22	5.59
HSQ-Self-enhancing	36.45	8.27
HSQ-Aggressive	29.31	8.17
HSQ-Self-defeating	28.41	9.74
IMS-Investment	30.00	7.21
IMS-Alternatives	16.55	9.62
IMS-Commitment	46.73	9.75
Partner PANQ-Satisfaction	27.38	3.14
Partner PANQ-Dissatisfaction	9.28	5.55

Note. HSQ = Humour Styles Questionnaire, IMS = Investment Model Scale, PANQ = Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale.

Hypothesis Testing

Question 1. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles relate to daily satisfaction?

To examine this question, I estimated two random coefficient models with day-level relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction as the outcome variables and the four day-level humour styles as predictor variables. For example, for relationship satisfaction, I estimated the following model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\text{PANQ-SAT} = \pi_0 + \pi_1 (\text{DHSQ-AF}) + \pi_2 (\text{DHSQ-SE}) + \pi_3 (\text{DHSQ-AG}) + \pi_4 (\text{DHSQ-SD}) + e$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + r_0$$

$$\pi_1 = \beta_{10} + r_1$$

$$\pi_2 = \beta_{20} + r_2$$

$$\pi_3 = \beta_{30} + r_3$$

$$\pi_4 = \beta_{40} + r_4$$

As shown in Table 4, all four daily humour styles were significantly related to individual changes in relationship satisfaction. Each unit increase in affiliative humour was associated with a .55 unit increase in relationship satisfaction and each unit increase in self-enhancing humour was associated with a .12 unit increase in relationship satisfaction. Conversely, increases in aggressive and self-defeating humour were associated with .14 and .25 decreases in relationship satisfaction, respectively.

Table 4

Daily Humour Styles Predicting Same-Day Satisfaction

Fixed Effect	PANQ-Satisfaction		PANQ-Dissatisfaction	
	β	t	β	t
Intercept	26.53	101.64***	9.81	23.36***
DHSQ-Affiliative	.55	9.22***	-.41	-4.79***
DHSQ-Self-enhancing	.12	2.79**	-.02	-.24
DHSQ-Aggressive	-.14	-2.66**	.22	2.56*
DHSQ-Self-defeating	-.25	-3.04**	.38	3.45**

Note. DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire, PANQ = Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

To evaluate the association between daily humour styles and relationship dissatisfaction, I estimated the model shown above, with relationship dissatisfaction as the outcome variable.

As shown in Table 4, affiliative humour was significantly associated with individual change in relationship dissatisfaction, such that a unit increase in affiliative humour was related to a .41 unit decrease in relationship dissatisfaction. Conversely, unit increases in aggressive and self-defeating humour were significantly associated with .22 and .38 unit increases in relationship dissatisfaction, respectively.

In summary, as predicted, an increase in the daily use of affiliative and self-enhancing humour in the relationship on a given day was positively associated with an increase in daily relationship satisfaction on the same day. Increased use of affiliative humour was also associated with a decrease in relationship dissatisfaction. However, my prediction of a negative association between daily self-enhancing humour and relationship dissatisfaction was not confirmed.

My prediction that the daily use of aggressive and self-defeating humour would be positively associated with daily relationship dissatisfaction and negatively associated with daily relationship satisfaction was also supported.

Question 2. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles predict relationship satisfaction or does relationship satisfaction predict daily relationship-focused humour styles?

First, I investigated whether daily humour styles were related to past relationship satisfaction. In order to examine this association, I manipulated the data files such that, on each line of data at the day-level, measures of daily humour styles from a given data

collection day were placed with the measures of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction from the preceding data collection day. To examine how previous-day relationship satisfaction was associated with daily humour styles I estimated the following random coefficients model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Previous-Day PANQ-SAT} = & \pi_0 + \pi_1 (\text{DHSQ-AF}) + \pi_2 (\text{DHSQ-SE}) + \pi_3 \\ & (\text{DHSQ-AG}) + \pi_4 (\text{DHSQ-SD}) + e \end{aligned}$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + r_0$$

$$\pi_1 = \beta_{10} + r_1$$

$$\pi_2 = \beta_{20}$$

$$\pi_3 = \beta_{30}$$

$$\pi_4 = \beta_{40} + r_4$$

As shown in Table 5, an increase in affiliative humour on a given day was significantly associated with an increase in previous-day relationship satisfaction, such that each unit increase in affiliative humour was related to a .35 unit increase in previous-day relationship satisfaction. Conversely, increases in aggressive and self-defeating humour were negatively associated with individual decreases in previous-day relationship satisfaction. One unit increases in aggressive and self-defeating humour were associated with .13 and .18 unit decreases in relationship satisfaction, respectively.

Next, I investigated the associations between daily humour styles and previous-day relationship dissatisfaction. To do so, I estimated a model identical to the one above, except previous-day relationship dissatisfaction was entered as the outcome variable.

Table 5

Associations Between Daily Humour Styles and Previous-Day and Next-Day Relationship Satisfaction

Fixed Effect	PANQ-Satisfaction		PANQ-Dissatisfaction	
	β	t	β	t
Previous-Day Satisfaction				
Intercept	26.61	104.52***	9.84	22.76***
DHSQ-Affiliative	.35	5.49***	-.21	-2.18*
DHSQ-Self-enhancing	.04	.60	.08	.97
DHSQ-Aggressive	-.13	-2.10*	.03	.34
DHSQ-Self-defeating	-.18	-2.15*	.20	1.58
Next-Day Satisfaction				
Intercept	25.89	72.36***	9.42	19.52***
DHSQ-Affiliative	.30	5.20***	-.12	-1.57
DHSQ-Self-enhancing	-.04	-.71	.03	.42
DHSQ-Aggressive	-.25	-2.93**	.33	3.43***
DHSQ-Self-defeating	-.03	-.40	-.13	-1.31

Note. DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire, PANQ = Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

As shown in Table 5, the degree of daily affiliative humour was significantly associated with relationship dissatisfaction. A unit increase in affiliative humour was related to a .21 unit decrease in relationship dissatisfaction. Daily use of self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humour styles were not significantly related to increases or decreases in relationship dissatisfaction.

I also examined how daily humour styles related to future relationship satisfaction. In order to investigate this question, I manipulated the data files such that, on each line of data at the day-level, measures of daily humour styles from a given data collection day were placed with the measures of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction from the next data collection day. I estimated the following random coefficients model to examine the association between day-level humour styles and next-day relationship satisfaction:

Level 1 Model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Next-Day PANQ-SAT} = & \pi_0 + \pi_1 (\text{DHSQ-AF}) + \pi_2 (\text{DHSQ-SE}) + \pi_3 \\ & (\text{DHSQ-AG}) + \pi_4 (\text{DHSQ-SD}) + e \end{aligned}$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + r_0$$

$$\pi_1 = \beta_{10}$$

$$\pi_2 = \beta_{20}$$

$$\pi_3 = \beta_{30}$$

$$\pi_4 = \beta_{40}$$

As shown in Table 5, a unit increase in affiliative humour was significantly associated with a .30 unit increase in next-day relationship satisfaction, and a unit

increase in aggressive humour was significantly associated with a .18 unit decrease in next-day relationship satisfaction.

Next, I investigated the relationship between daily humour styles and next-day relationship dissatisfaction. To do so, I estimated a model identical to the one above, except next-day relationship dissatisfaction was entered as the outcome variable.

As shown in Table 5, a unit increase in aggressive humour was significantly related to a .33 unit increase in next-day relationship dissatisfaction.

These analyses were conducted for exploratory purposes; no specific predictions were made. In summary, affiliative humour had a reciprocal relationship with relationship satisfaction, such that individuals engaged in more affiliative humour when they were more satisfied with their relationships on previous data collection days, and when they engaged in more affiliative humour they were more satisfied with their relationships in the future. There was also a reciprocal association between aggressive humour and relationship satisfaction. Individuals engaged in more aggressive humour when they were less satisfied with their relationships on previous data collection days, and when they engaged in more aggressive humour, they were less satisfied with their relationships in the future.

These analyses also revealed a number of findings that were unidirectional. When individuals experienced increases in relationship dissatisfaction on a given day, they engaged in more aggressive humour on the subsequent data collection days. However, the inverse relationship was not significant (i.e., participants who engaged in more aggressive humour on a given day were not more dissatisfied with their relationships on the subsequent diary day). When participants experienced more relationship satisfaction on a

given day, they engaged in less self-defeating humour in the future. However, engaging in less self-defeating humour did not predict relationship satisfaction. Finally, when participants engaged in more aggressive humour on a given day, they were more dissatisfied with their relationships in the following diary day. Again, this association was not reciprocal; when participants were more dissatisfied with their relationships, they did not engage in more aggressive humour in the future. These analyses provide support for the view that relationship dissatisfaction predicts increases in aggressive humour, that relationship satisfaction predicts a reduction in self-defeating humour, and that aggressive humour predicts relationship dissatisfaction.

Question 3. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles relate to positive and negative interactions in the relationship?

To examine this question, I estimated two random coefficients models with positive and negative interactions entered as outcome variables. The four day-level humour styles were entered as predictors in each model. For positive interactions, I estimated the following model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\text{Positive Interactions} = \pi_0 + \pi_1 (\text{DHSQ-AF}) + \pi_2 (\text{DHSQ-SE}) + \pi_3 (\text{DHSQ-AG}) + \pi_4 (\text{DHSQ-SD}) + e$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + r_0$$

$$\pi_1 = \beta_{10} + r_1$$

$$\pi_2 = \beta_{20}$$

$$\pi_3 = \beta_{30}$$

$$\pi_4 = \beta_{40}$$

As shown in Table 6, a unit increase in affiliative humour was associated with a .51 unit increase in positive interactions and a unit increase in self-enhancing humour was associated with a .08 unit increase in positive interactions.

To examine the relationship between humour styles and negative interactions, I estimated the following model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Negative Interactions} = & \pi_0 + \pi_1 (\text{DHSQ-AF}) + \pi_2 (\text{DHSQ-SE}) + \pi_3 (\text{DHSQ-} \\ & \text{AG}) + \pi_4 (\text{DHSQ-SD}) + e \end{aligned}$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + r_0$$

$$\pi_1 = \beta_{10} + r_1$$

$$\pi_2 = \beta_{20}$$

$$\pi_3 = \beta_{30}$$

$$\pi_4 = \beta_{40} + r_4$$

As shown in Table 6, a unit increase in aggressive humour was significantly associated with a .14 unit increase in negative interactions and a unit increase in self-defeating humour was associated with a .09 increase in negative interactions.

In summary, as predicted, increases in affiliative and self-enhancing humour on a given day were significantly associated with increased positive interactions in the relationship on the same day, whereas increases in aggressive and self-defeating humour were associated with increased negative interactions in the relationship.

Table 6

Daily Humour Styles Predicting Same-Day Positive and Negative Interactions

Fixed Effect	Positive Interactions		Negative Interactions	
	β	t	β	t
Intercept	9.88	56.78***	1.39	19.56***
DHSQ-Affiliative	.51	11.76***	-.03	-1.67
DHSQ-Self-enhancing	.08	2.25*	-.01	-.90
DHSQ-Aggressive	.04	.95	.14	6.75***
DHSQ-Self-defeating	.03	.61	.09	3.56***

Note. DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Question 4. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles predict positive and negative interactions or do positive and negative interactions predict daily relationship-focused humour styles?

To examine this research question, I manipulated the data files to include measures of daily humour styles from a given data collection day along with the measures of positive and negative interactions from the previous-day and next-day diaries, respectively. To investigate the association between previous-day positive interactions and daily humour styles, I estimated the following random coefficients model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Previous-Day Positive Interactions} = & \pi_0 + \pi_1 (\text{DHSQ-AF}) + \pi_2 (\text{DHSQ-SE}) \\ & + \pi_3 (\text{DHSQ-AG}) + \pi_4 (\text{DHSQ-SD}) + e \end{aligned}$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + r_0$$

$$\pi_1 = \beta_{10}$$

$$\pi_2 = \beta_{20}$$

$$\pi_3 = \beta_{30}$$

$$\pi_4 = \beta_{40}$$

As shown in Table 7, each unit increase in affiliative humour was significantly associated with a .35 unit increase in previous-day positive interactions. Conversely, unit increases in aggressive and self-defeating humour were associated with .13 and .18 unit decreases in previous-day positive interactions, respectively.

Table 7

Associations Between Daily Humour Styles and Previous-Day and Next-Day Positive and Negative Interactions

Fixed Effect	Positive Interactions		Negative Interactions	
	β	t	β	t
Previous-Day Interactions				
Intercept	9.84	53.12***	1.39	19.11***
DHSQ-Affiliative	.35	5.49***	-.21	-2.18*
DHSQ-Self-enhancing	.04	.60	.08	.97
DHSQ-Aggressive	-.13	-2.10*	.03	.34
DHSQ-Self-defeating	-.18	-2.15*	.20	1.58
Next-Day Interactions				
Intercept	9.75	45.47***	1.42	18.10***
DHSQ-Affiliative	.20	3.83***	-.02	-.94
DHSQ-Self-enhancing	.06	1.37	.00	.00
DHSQ-Aggressive	-.07	-1.41	.07	3.11**
DHSQ-Self-defeating	-.02	.29	.02	.92

Note. DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

To investigate the association between previous-day negative interactions and daily humour styles, I estimated a model identical to the one above, except previous-day negative interactions was entered as the outcome variable. As shown in Table 7, each unit increase in affiliative humour was associated with a .21 unit decrease in previous-day negative interactions.

To investigate the association between next-day positive interactions and daily humour styles, I estimated the following model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Next-Day Positive Interactions} = & \pi_0 + \pi_1 (\text{DHSQ-AF}) + \pi_2 (\text{DHSQ-SE}) + \\ & \pi_3 (\text{DHSQ-AG}) + \pi_4 (\text{DHSQ-SD}) + e \end{aligned}$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + r_0$$

$$\pi_1 = \beta_{10}$$

$$\pi_2 = \beta_{20}$$

$$\pi_3 = \beta_{30} + r_3$$

$$\pi_4 = \beta_{40}$$

As shown in Table 7, each unit increase affiliative humour was associated with a .20 unit increase in next-day positive interactions.

To investigate the relationship between next-day negative interactions and daily humour styles I estimated the following model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Next-Day Negative Interactions} = & \pi_0 + \pi_1 (\text{DHSQ-AF}) + \pi_2 (\text{DHSQ-SE}) + \\ & \pi_3 (\text{DHSQ-AG}) + \pi_4 (\text{DHSQ-SD}) + e \end{aligned}$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + r_0$$

$$\pi_1 = \beta_{10} + r_1$$

$$\pi_2 = \beta_{20}$$

$$\pi_3 = \beta_{30}$$

$$\pi_4 = \beta_{40}$$

As shown in Table 7, each unit increase in aggressive humour was associated with a .07 unit increase in next-day negative interactions.

No specific predictions were made with respect to this research question. In summary, the relationship between affiliative humour and positive interactions appeared to be reciprocal; individuals who engaged in more affiliative humour on previous days experienced an increase in positive interactions on following days and individuals who engaged in more positive interactions engaged in more affiliative humour on later days.

These analyses also revealed a number of findings that were unidirectional. Individuals who had previously experienced an increase in negative interactions with their partners engaged in lower levels of affiliative humour in the future. However, this association was not reciprocal; decreases in affiliative humour did not predict increases in future negative interactions. Finally, individuals who engaged in more aggressive humour on previous days experienced an increase in negative interactions on following days. Again, this relationship was not reciprocal; an increase in negative interactions was not associated with a future increase in aggressive humour.

Question 5. Do participants' daily relationship-focused humour styles relate to their partners' relationship satisfaction?

To examine this question, I estimated four intercept-as-outcome models that considered the relationship between each humour style and partners' relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Day-level assessments of the participants' four humour styles were entered as outcome variables and partners' relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction were entered as predictors. For example, to examine the relationship between partners' relationship satisfaction and participants' affiliative humour, I estimated the following model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\text{DHSQ-AF} = \pi_0 + e$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_0 = \beta_{00} + \beta_{01} (\text{PARTNER-PANQ-SAT}) + \beta_{02} (\text{PARTNER-PANQ-DIS}) + r_0$$

As shown in Table 8, participants' daily use of affiliative humour was positively related to their partners' positive relationship satisfaction. However, contrary to my predictions, no other humour styles were related to partners' relationship satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Question 6. Do humour styles play a role in relationship persistence?

To examine this question I estimated four models that considered the relationship between each humour style and relationship status at follow-up. Relationship status was entered as a dummy coded variable with 1 indicating the couple was still together and 0

Table 8

Associations Between Daily Humour Styles and Partner Satisfaction

Fixed Effect	DHSQ-AF		DHSQ-SE		DHSQ-AG		DHSQ-SD	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
Intercept	12.25	44.83***	8.56	31.83***	6.19	23.72***	5.32	19.27***
Partner PANQ-SAT	.19	2.16*	.02	0.33	-.04	-.36	-.06	-.52
Partner PANQ-DIS	-.00	-.04	.05	.82	-.04	-.66	.01	.20

Note. DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire, AF = Affiliative, SE = Self-enhancing, AG = Aggressive, SD = Self-defeating, PANQ = Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale, SAT = Relationship Satisfaction, DIS = Relationship Dissatisfaction.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

indicating that the couple had broken up. For example, to examine the role of affiliative humour and relationship status, I estimated the following intercept-as-outcome model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\text{DHSQ-AF} = \pi_o + e$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_o = \beta_{00} + \beta_{01} (\text{RELATIONSHIP STATUS}) + r_0$$

As shown in Table 9, day-level affiliative humour was associated with relationship persistence. On average, participants who were still with their partners measured 2.26 units higher on affiliative humour than participants who had broken up. None of the other humour styles were associated with relationship persistence.

This finding was contrary to my hypotheses. Based on past research (Puhlik-Doris, 2004) I had predicted that high levels of affiliative, aggressive, and self-defeating humour would predict break-up. Because I was interested in replicating Puhlik-Doris' (2004) results, I departed from HLM analyses in order to further explore this research question. I conducted a series of independent *t*-tests to examine whether individuals whose relationships had broken up endorsed more or less of the four humour styles on the original trait-level measure of the HSQ compared to individuals who were still in the same dating relationships. As shown in Table 10, there were no significant differences between the two groups for any of the four trait-level humour styles.

In sum, contrary to previous research, affiliative humour was associated with relationship persistence, such that individuals who used more affiliative humour were more likely to stay together. Aggressive, self-defeating, and self-enhancing humour were not related to relationship status at follow-up.

Table 9

Associations Between Daily Humour Styles and Relationship Persistence

Fixed Effect	DHSQ-AF		DHSQ-SE		DHSQ-AG		DHSQ-SD	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
Intercept	10.14	20.44***	8.41	20.39***	5.99	13.90***	5.28	12.66***
Relationship Status	2.26	4.00***	.07	.14	.50	1.00	.21	.43

Note. Relationship status (1 = together, 0 = broke up), DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire, AF = Affiliative, SE = Self-enhancing, AG = Aggressive, SD = Self-defeating.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 10

Mean Trait-Level Humour Styles

Variable	Broken Up	Still Together	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
HSQ-Affiliative	47.16	46.92	.20	<i>ns</i>
HSQ-Self-enhancing	36.84	35.85	.57	<i>ns</i>
HSQ-Self-defeating	30.00	29.20	.47	<i>ns</i>
HSQ-Aggressive	29.16	28.57	.29	<i>ns</i>

Note. HSQ = Humour Styles Questionnaire, *ns* = nonsignificant.

Question 7. Does Rusbult's (1998) Investment Model help to explain the relationship between humour styles, relationship satisfaction, and relationship persistence?

To investigate the association between humour styles and Investment Model variables, I estimated four intercept-as-outcome models with each day-level humour style entered as an outcome variable. Trait-level commitment, quality of alternatives, and investment were entered as predictor variables. For example, for affiliative humour, I estimated the following model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\text{DHSQ-AF} = \pi_o + e$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_o = \beta_{00} + \beta_{01} (\text{INVESTMENT}) + \beta_{02} (\text{ALTERNATIVES}) + \beta_{03} (\text{COMMITMENT}) + r_o$$

I expected to find a relationship between affiliative humour and quality of alternatives, such that individuals high on affiliative humour would perceive more alternatives to their relationships. As shown in Table 11, this hypothesis was not confirmed. In fact, none of the four day-level humour styles were related to quality of alternatives. I had also hypothesized that individuals who were high on both affiliative humour and quality of alternatives would be more likely to break up than their counterparts. I did not examine this hypothesis because I did not demonstrate the expected positive association between affiliative humour and relationship persistence and between affiliative humour and quality of alternatives.

Table 11

Associations Between Investment Model Variables and Daily Humour Styles

Fixed Effect	DHSQ-AF		DHSQ-SE		DHSQ-AG		DHSQ-SD	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
Intercept	11.81	53.01***	8.58	42.15***	6.41	33.24***	5.51	28.11***
IMS-Investment	.02	.51	.05	1.45	.00	.08	.02	.46
IMS-Alternatives	.01	.47	.03	1.09	.02	.85	.01	.46
IMS-Commitment	.05	1.59	-.03	-1.16	-.06	-2.20*	-.07	-2.69**

Note. DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire, IMS = Investment Model Scale, AF = Affiliative, SE = Self-enhancing, AG = Aggressive, SD = Self-defeating.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 11 also depicts the associations between daily humour styles and commitment and investment size. Like quality of alternatives, investment size was unrelated to daily humour styles. However, the negative humour styles were associated with lower levels of commitment. Each unit increase in commitment was associated with a .06 and a .07 unit decrease on aggressive and self-defeating humour, respectively.

Question 8. Do trait-level humour styles predict the corresponding daily relationship-focused humour styles?

To investigate the association between day-level humour styles and trait-level humour styles I estimated four intercept-as-outcome models with each of the four day-level humour styles entered as outcome variables and all four trait-level humour styles entered as predictors. For example, for the outcome variable day-level affiliative humour, I estimated the following model:

Level 1 Model:

$$\text{DHSQ-AF} = \pi_o + e$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\begin{aligned} \pi_o = & \beta_{00} + \beta_{01} (\text{HSQ-AF}) + \beta_{02} (\text{HSQ-SE}) + \beta_{03} (\text{HSQ-AG}) + \beta_{04} (\text{HSQ-SD}) \\ & + r_0 \end{aligned}$$

As shown in Table 12, my hypothesis that daily levels of relationship-focused humour styles would be strongly linked to the corresponding trait-level humour styles was supported. Increases in each trait-level humour style were associated with higher levels of the corresponding day-level humour style. Moreover, increases in trait-level self-defeating humour corresponded with higher day-levels of aggressive humour and

Table 12

Association Between Trait-Level Humour Styles and Daily Humour Styles

Fixed Effect	DHSQ-AF		DHSQ-SE		DHSQ-AG		DHSQ-SD	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
Intercept	11.81	57.59***	8.57	50.87***	6.41	38.79***	5.51	35.04***
HSQ-AF	.16	3.71**	.04	1.22	-.03	-1.03	-.03	-1.04
HSQ-SE	.04	1.71	.15	7.42***	-.02	-1.12	-.02	-1.36
HSQ-AG	-.00	-.03	.01	.53	.10	4.02***	.05	2.14*
HSQ-SD	-.00	-.17	.03	1.30	.08	3.72***	.13	7.03***

Note. DHSQ = Daily Humour Styles Questionnaire, HSQ = Humour Styles Questionnaire, AF = Affiliative, SE = Self-enhancing, AG = Aggressive, SD = Self-defeating.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

increases in trait-level aggressive humour were associated with higher day-levels of self-defeating humour.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore the associations between relationship-focused humour styles and relationship satisfaction, positive and negative interactions in the relationship, and relationship persistence using a process-oriented repeated-measures approach.

In general, I expected that affiliative and self-enhancing humour would be positively related to relationship outcome variables, such as relationship satisfaction and stability. Additionally, I predicted that aggressive and self-defeating humour would be negatively associated with relationship quality variables.

In general, my results supported these overarching predictions. Affiliative and self-enhancing humour were positively associated with relationship satisfaction and positive interactions in the relationship, whereas aggressive and self-defeating humour were associated with relationship dissatisfaction and negative interactions in the relationship. Moreover, participants whose relationships persisted at follow-up engaged in higher levels of affiliative humour than their counterparts.

Several research questions guided this research. First, I will discuss the results and implications of each research question in turn. Then I will discuss the limitations and strengths of the current investigation, propose some ideas for future research, and conclude with a general discussion of my results.

Question 1. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles relate to daily relationship satisfaction?

As predicted, day-to-day increases in affiliative and self-enhancing humour were associated with increased levels of relationship satisfaction, and increases in aggressive and self-defeating humour were associated with corresponding decreases in relationship satisfaction. Also as predicted, aggressive and self-defeating humour were associated with higher levels of relationship dissatisfaction, and affiliative humour was associated with lower levels of relationship dissatisfaction. However, contrary to my expectations, self-enhancing humour was not associated with lower levels of relationship dissatisfaction.

My results are partially consistent with previous research. In her cross-sectional correlational study with young dating couples, Puhlik-Doris (2004) found that scores on the trait measure of affiliative and self-enhancing humour were related to higher levels of relationship satisfaction and that aggressive humour was related to higher levels of relationship dissatisfaction. I replicated these results using a process-oriented diary methodology. Moreover, I demonstrated a number of other associations between humour styles and relationship satisfaction. Indeed, I found that affiliative humour was related to lower levels of relationship dissatisfaction, and that the two negative humour styles were associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction. It appears that using a relationship-focused measure of humour styles with repeated measures across time enabled me to discover more subtle associations between humour styles and relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Although my results confirmed and expanded on Puhlik-Doris' (2004) research findings, my findings are at odds with research conducted by Cann and colleagues (2011).

In their study, also conducted with young dating couples, participants' self-reported humour styles were not associated with their self-reported relationship satisfaction. Instead, participants' perceptions of their partners' humour styles were most strongly associated with participants' own relationship satisfaction. However, Cann and colleagues took a different methodological approach than the current study, using a unidimensional measure of relationship satisfaction and the original trait version of the HSQ. It is possible that the use of a two-dimensional measure of relationship satisfaction and relationship-focused measures of humour styles would yield different results.

Overall, my findings support the view that affiliative and self-enhancing humour are positively related to relationship satisfaction and that affiliative humour is negatively related to relationship dissatisfaction. Conversely, aggressive and self-defeating humour are associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction and higher levels of relationship dissatisfaction.

There are a number of reasons why humour styles may be associated with relationship satisfaction. Several researchers have suggested that individuals' personality characteristics have implications for their relationships (e.g., Berry & Willingham, 1997; Côté & Moskowitz, 1998; Reis, Capobianco, & Tsai, 2002; Russell & Wells, 1994). For example, Reis and colleagues (2002) propose that both situational contexts and the personality traits of each partner influence interaction patterns in relationships. Taking this approach, humour styles can be viewed as personality characteristics that influence relationships. As we have seen, positive humour styles are positively associated with relationship satisfaction, whereas negative humour styles are negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. Moreover, humour styles are differentially related to a number

of other personality variables that are themselves associated with relationship satisfaction. For example, affiliative and self-enhancing humour are positively associated with extraversion (Martin et al., 2003) and some research has found that extraversion is positively associated with relationship quality (Donnellan, Conger, & Bryant, 2004). Conversely, aggressive and self-defeating humour are positively associated with neuroticism (Martin et al., 2003), and neuroticism has been linked to reduced levels of relationship satisfaction for both members of a romantic dyad, less positive affect during pleasurable interactions, and lower frequency of pleasurable interactions (Côté & Moskowitz, 1998; Russell & Wells, 1994).

In line with the view that personality characteristics influence interpersonal interactions (Reis et al., 2002), individuals who engage in high levels of positive humour and low levels of negative humour may be more enjoyable to interact with. In a study on friendship and humour styles, Ward (2004) demonstrated that individuals who engaged in high levels of affiliative humour and low levels of aggressive humour were rated by their friends as more enjoyable to interact with and were perceived as fulfilling more positive friendship functions, such as companionship, intimacy, emotional security, and affection. Additionally, Martin and Dutzac (2004) demonstrated that affiliative and self-enhancing humour were positively associated with enjoyable social activities and positive verbal interactions. Conversely, aggressive and self-defeating humour were associated with more negative social activities and negative verbal interactions.

Furthermore, Martin (2007) suggests that positive humour styles can be viewed as a type of social skill, whereas negative humour styles can be viewed as a social skills deficit. Research shows that affiliative humour, self-enhancing humour, and cheerfulness

are associated with greater ability to initiate relationships and engage in personal self-disclosure (Yip & Martin, 2006). Additionally, self-enhancing humour is associated with more giving and receiving of empathy, whereas aggressive humour is associated with less giving and receiving of empathy (Martin & Dutzac, 2004).

In addition, individuals who are able to use humour effectively may also be at an advantage during times of conflict. In a longitudinal study conducted by Gottman and colleagues (1998) humour expression by wives during a problem discussion was predictive of greater marital stability over a six-year period when wives' humour led to a reduction in husbands' heart rates during the conversations. Evidently, engaging in appropriate humour during a problem discussion can be emotionally calming to relationship partners. The ability to use positive humour during times of conflict may prevent conflicts from escalating. Conversely, aggressive humour has been linked to lower conflict management abilities (Yip & Martin, 2006). People who use hostile humour during a conflict may alienate their partners and increase their partners' negative affect.

Research conducted at the University of Western Ontario also supports the notion that positive and negative humour styles are associated with conflict discussion outcome variables. Among dating couples, greater use of affiliative humour during a problem discussion was associated with increased feelings of closeness, less emotional distress, greater perceived conflict resolution, and greater overall relationship satisfaction. On the contrary, aggressive humour was associated with less perceived conflict resolution and lower ratings of relationship satisfaction (Campbell et al., 2008; Martin, Campbell, & Ward, 2006).

In sum, my results demonstrate that, over time, individuals who use more positive humour styles with their partners experience more relationship satisfaction and less relationship dissatisfaction. In contrast, individuals who used higher levels of negative humour with their partners over time experienced less relationship satisfaction and more relationship dissatisfaction.

Question 2. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles predict relationship satisfaction or does relationship satisfaction predict daily relationship-focused humour styles?

One purpose of the present study was to examine the direction of the associations between humour styles and relationship satisfaction. For instance, participants may engage in more affiliative humour because they are happy with their relationships. On the other hand, engaging in affiliative humour may enhance relationship satisfaction. Because this was the first study to investigate this research question, no specific hypotheses were made.

Overall, my results indicated that affiliative humour had a reciprocal relationship with relationship satisfaction. That is, individuals engaged in more affiliative humour when they were more satisfied with their relationships on previous data collection days (suggesting that greater relationship satisfaction causes increased use of affiliative humour), and when they engaged in more affiliative humour they were more satisfied with their relationships in the future (suggesting that greater use of affiliative humour causes an increase in relationship satisfaction). Thus, relationship satisfaction predicted affiliative humour and affiliative humour predicted relationship satisfaction.

There was also a reciprocal relationship between aggressive humour and relationship satisfaction. Individuals engaged in increased aggressive humour following a decrease in satisfaction with their relationships on previous data collection days, and when they reported an increase in their use of aggressive humour, they were less satisfied with their relationships on future data collection days. Of course, these analyses do not prove causality. However, by examining time-lagged associations, these results provide support for the view that the associations between interpersonal humour styles (i.e., affiliative and aggressive humour) and relationship satisfaction go both ways.

However, some other findings provided evidence of unidirectional links between humour styles and satisfaction. For example, the finding that participants who have been experiencing increased levels of relationship dissatisfaction engage in less affiliative humour on subsequent data collection days (but not the opposite) suggests that affiliative humour may be a product of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction. That is, relationship satisfaction may influence the amount of affiliative humour people use with their partners, such that when people are feeling more positive about their relationships and less negative, they engage in more joking and humorous behaviour with their partners. Conversely, the finding that participants who used higher levels of aggressive humour at a given point in time became more dissatisfied with their relationships at a later point (but not the reverse) suggests that relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction may be, to some extent, a product of aggressive humour. That is, aggressive humour may influence the degree of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction. When individuals use humour to criticize or manipulate their partners, they may begin to experience less relationship satisfaction as a result.

There was also an association between self-defeating humour and previous-day relationship satisfaction, such that individuals who were more satisfied with their relationships reported lower levels of self-defeating humour on subsequent days. When individuals are satisfied with their relationships, they may feel less of a need to utilize self-defeating humour to gain the approval of their partners at their own expense. Alternatively, their high degree of relationship satisfaction may enhance their psychosocial well-being. Research has demonstrated that measures of psychosocial well-being are associated with lower levels of self-defeating humour (Kazarian & Martin, 2004; Martin et al., 2003; Martin, 2007; Yip & Martin, 2006). If participants are experiencing high levels of emotional well-being, they may be less likely to amuse others at their own expense.

Overall, then, the results of this study suggest that certain humour styles and components of relationship satisfaction have a reciprocal causal association, whereas in the case of other humour styles and components of relationship satisfaction, the association may be unidirectional.

Question 3. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles relate to positive and negative interactions in the relationship?

I also examined the associations between humour styles and positive and negative interactions in dating relationships. In addition to relationship satisfaction, positive and negative interactions can be viewed as another indicator of the quality of couples' interactions.

My results confirmed my predictions that increased affiliative and self-enhancing humour would be associated with corresponding increases in positive interactions in

relationships and that increased aggressive and self-defeating humour would be associated with more negative interactions in relationships.

The study by Martin and Dutzac (2004) was the only other study that has utilized the diary approach to examine the association between humour styles and positive and negative interactions in relationships, although this study used only the trait measure of humour styles rather than repeated relationship-focused assessments. Consistent with the findings of Martin and Dutzac (2004), I found that self-enhancing humour was associated with more positive interactions in the relationship, whereas aggressive humour was associated with more negative interactions. However, I additionally found that affiliative humour was associated with more positive interactions, whereas self-defeating humour was associated with more negative interactions. It appears that utilizing a relationship-focused measure of humour styles enabled me to find more associations between humour styles and positive and negative relationship interactions. Moreover, Martin and Dutzac's (2004) study looked at participants' relationships with a number of close others (e.g., friends, parents, roommates), whereas my study focused on relationships with dating partners only. Perhaps the associations between affiliative and self-defeating humour and relationship interactions are specific to dating partners. With respect to affiliative humour, the association with positive interactions is intuitive. Most likely, people are more likely to joke around in the context of a pleasurable versus a negative event (e.g., arguing).

With respect to self-defeating humour, an explanation for the positive association with negative interactions is less clear. Perhaps when individuals are experiencing friction in their relationships, they are more likely to use self-defeating humour in an attempt to

amuse their partners at their own expense and thereby gain their partners' approval. For instance, individuals who have let their partners down may engage in excessively self-disparaging humour to demonstrate their remorse and attempt to garner affection from their partners.

Overall, then, I found that individuals who used higher levels of the positive humour styles also engaged in more positive interactions with their partners. Conversely, individuals who used higher levels of the negative humour styles engaged in more negative interactions with their partners. These results provide further support for the notion that humour styles are related to relationship quality.

Question 4. Do daily relationship-focused humour styles predict positive and negative interactions or do positive and negative interactions predict daily relationship-focused humour styles?

Another purpose of the present study was to examine the direction of the associations between humour styles and relationship interactions. For instance, does the experience of negative interactions lead to aggressive humour, or does aggressive humour lead to negative interactions? This investigation was the first to examine this research question. Therefore, I made no specific predictions.

The results suggest that the relationship between affiliative humour and positive interactions is reciprocal; individuals who engaged in increased affiliative humour on previous days experienced an increase in positive interactions on following days, and individuals who engaged in more positive interactions on previous days experienced more affiliative humour on later days. More use of affiliative humour (e.g., joking and laughing together) seems to result in a later increase in positive interactions (e.g., giving

compliments, providing support), and an increase in such positive interactions in turn seems to lead to a further increase in affiliative humour.

However, some unidirectional associations were found with other humour styles. In particular, I found that individuals who had previously experienced more negative interactions with their partners subsequently experienced reduced levels of affiliative humour (but not the reverse). This finding suggests that, following an increase in negative interactions between couples, such as arguments or criticism, a reduction in use of affiliative humour may occur as a consequence.

In addition, participants who engaged in higher levels of positive interactions with their partners subsequently engaged in lower levels of aggressive and self-defeating humour (but not the reverse). In other words, aggressive and self-defeating humour seem to occur as a consequence of a lack of pleasurable interactions in dating relationships. Again, these results suggest that the humour styles people use in their relationships are a consequence of the degree of pleasure obtained from interactions with their partners.

Although the majority of my findings implied that interactions precede humour styles, the associations with aggressive humour were more complex. As discussed above, previous-day positive interactions were associated with lower levels of aggressive humour. However, previous-day aggressive humour was also associated with next-day negative interactions. Thus, the relationship between aggressive humour and previous-day and next-day interactions is unique. When individuals engage in aggressive humour with their dating partners, they tend to experience an increase in other negative interactions a few days later. This makes good theoretical sense. When individuals use humour to make fun of their partners or make their partners the butt of their jokes, they may alienate their

partners and create friction in their relationships. Thus, it is not surprising that they would experience more negative interactions in their relationships.

Overall, the results suggest that changes in the use of various humour styles occur as a consequence of previous-day interactions with the partner rather than having an effect on changes in next-day interactions. Specifically, when individuals experience more positive interactions with their partners, they are more likely to engage in increased affiliative humour, and reduced aggressive and self-defeating humour a few days later. Similarly, when individuals experience more negative interactions with their partners, they are less likely to engage in affiliative humour later on. Only in the case of aggressive humour does a humour style seem to produce a subsequent change in relationship interactions (in particular, an increase in negative interactions).

Question 5. Do participants' humour styles relate to their partners' relationship satisfaction?

As predicted, participants' daily relationship-focused levels of affiliative humour were related to higher levels of relationship satisfaction reported by their partners. However, contrary to my expectations, no other humour styles were related to partners' relationship satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

My hypotheses and my results challenged previous research. Research utilizing a unidimensional measure of relationship satisfaction and the original trait version of the HSQ found no associations between participants' humour styles and their partners' relationship satisfaction (Cann et al., 2011). Moreover, Puhlik-Doris (2004) found no associations between participants' self-reported trait-level humour styles and their partners' ratings of relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

My results demonstrate that the more participants used affiliative humour with their partners over time, the more satisfied their partners were. There are some methodological reasons why my research may have found associations between participants' self-reported use of affiliative humour and partners' relationship satisfaction when other research did not. First, I utilized a relationship-focused measure of humour styles that assessed how participants used humour with their partners (not in general). Humour that individuals use with their partners is likely more related to relationship satisfaction than humour that individuals use in general. Second, I collected seven measurements of relationship-focused humour styles, whereas past research only collected measurements of humour styles at one time period. My measurement of humour styles is likely more reliable because of my repeated-measures approach. Thus, partners' reported relationship satisfaction was associated with participants' repeated reports of affiliative humour with their partners. This finding suggests that partners' relationship satisfaction is primarily related to participants' use of affiliative humour; self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humour do not appear to be related to partners' relationship satisfaction. Thus, my results suggest that positive interpersonal uses of humour in the dating relationships of young adults may be most important for relationship satisfaction.

Although this finding contradicts past research, it is theoretically sound. Affiliative humour is thought to enhance relationships. In fact, Martin (2007, pp. 211) describes affiliative humour as "the tendency to say funny things...to facilitate relationships, and reduce interpersonal tension." At the trait-level, affiliative humour is positively associated with a host of constructs related to psychosocial well-being, such as self-esteem, positive emotion, optimism, social support, and intimacy, and negatively

associated with measures of psychopathology (Kazarian & Martin, 2004; Martin et al., 2003; Martin, 2007; Yip & Martin, 2006) . Although these relationships exist at the trait-level, they should also exist at the process-level. For example, positive and negative mood vary across time, just as humour use varies across time. Individuals who experience a high degree of psychosocial well-being may make better relationship partners than individuals who experience a low degree of psychosocial well-being. Thus, partners of high well-being individuals may be more satisfied with their relationships. Moreover, as my results demonstrate, affiliative humour is associated with higher frequency of positive interactions in relationships. Assuming that positive interactions give us some indication of relationship quality, we would expect that couples who share frequent positive experiences together would be more satisfied with their relationships.

Question 6. Do humour styles play a role in relationship persistence?

In part, this study was designed to replicate and explore a previous finding that individuals who used higher levels of affiliative and aggressive humour were more likely to break up than their counterparts (Puhlik-Doris, 2004). Based on this previous research, I predicted that high levels of affiliative, aggressive, and self-defeating humour would predict break-up. On the other hand, I predicted that self-enhancing humour would have a negative association with break-up, such that those high in self-enhancing humour would be less likely to break up than their counterparts.

My results did not support these hypotheses. Contrary to Puhlik-Doris' (2004) findings, I found that individuals who engaged in higher levels of affiliative humour with their partners were significantly less likely to break up. In addition, I did not find that aggressive humour was related to relationship persistence. Indeed, I found that, apart

from affiliative humour, no humour styles were associated with relationship persistence at follow-up.

Theoretically, it makes sense that affiliative humour predicts relationship persistence as opposed to relationship dissolution. As we have seen, affiliative humour is associated with participants' own relationship satisfaction, as well as their partners' reported relationship satisfaction. One would expect that couples who are more satisfied with their relationship are more likely to be in enduring relationships. My study was also designed to provide a more relationship-focused view of humour styles. Participants completed measures of their humour use with their partners over a series of three day periods. Moreover, they also completed a measure that assessed their relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction over a series of three day periods. The repeated-measures design of my study and the relationship-focused measure of humour styles I employed, offer an advantage over Puhlik-Doris' (2004) results. My finding that affiliative humour is associated with relationship persistence is more convincing than Puhlik-Doris' finding that affiliative humour (measured as a trait) is associated with relationship dissolution.

My results are also partially inconsistent with research conducted by Saroglou and colleagues (2010). These researchers found that low levels of affiliative and self-enhancing humour and high levels of self-defeating humour were associated with divorce and that high levels of affiliative and self-defeating humour were associated with relationship persistence. Methodological differences between the current study and Saroglou and colleagues' research may help explain why they found several humour styles to be predictive, whereas I found significant results only with affiliative humour. Whereas Saroglou examined humour styles in the context of long-term relationships

(couples had been married an average of 19.50 years), my study focused on young dating relationships (participants had been dating an average of 18.75 months). It is possible that affiliative humour is particularly relevant for relationships persistence early on in a relationship, whereas other styles become more important at later stages. Furthermore, a major limitation of the study conducted by Saroglou and colleagues was that divorced participants were asked to provide retrospective reports of their partners' humour styles and their own relationship satisfaction. The divorced status of these participants may have negatively biased their accounts of their ex-partners' humour, causing participants to exaggerate the amount of aggressive and self-defeating humour their ex-partners engaged in, and thereby producing spurious correlations.

In sum, I found that participants who engaged in more affiliative humour with their partners during the online diary period (average length of 33 days) were more likely to be in enduring relationships approximately five months later.

Question 7. Does Rusbult's (1998) Investment Model help to explain the relationship between humour styles, relationship satisfaction, and relationship persistence?

Overall, my results did not support my predictions that Investment Model variables would help explain associations between humour styles and relationship satisfaction and persistence.

I predicted that individuals who used more self-defeating humour would perceive lower levels of alternatives to their relationships. In other words, people who tend to use humour to put themselves down should feel that there are not many alternative options to their current relationships. However, I found no association between quality of alternatives and self-defeating humour. This finding was somewhat surprising. Self-

defeating humour is related to neuroticism, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and low levels of well-being, and insecure attachment (Cann et al., 2008; Martin et al., 2003; Saroglou et al., 2010). One would expect that an individual possessing these characteristics would perceive fewer potential relationship partners than his or her counterparts.

I also expected to find an association between affiliative humour and quality of alternatives, such that individuals high on affiliative humour would perceive more alternatives to their relationships. My results did not support this hypothesis. In fact, none of the four humour styles were related to quality of alternatives. This finding is somewhat surprising. As we have seen, humour is thought to influence interpersonal attraction and mate selection. Individuals who are able to make others laugh should be seen as more desirable relationship partners. In turn, being seen as a desirable relationship partner should enhance an individuals' perception that there are other potential rewarding relationships that they could enter into. However, this hypothesis was not confirmed.

I also predicted that when individuals were high on both affiliative humour and quality of alternatives, they would be more likely to break up than their counterparts. I did not examine this hypothesis for two reasons. First, contrary to my expectations (and the previous finding of Puhlik-Doris (2004)), affiliative humour was associated with relationship persistence instead of relationship dissolution. Second, contrary to my hypothesis, affiliative humour was not associated with quality of alternatives.

I conducted exploratory analyses to investigate how commitment and investment size were associated with daily humour styles and relationship satisfaction. My results indicated that investment size (i.e., the degree and importance of resources attached to the

relationship) was not related to humour styles. However, there were some findings with respect to commitment. Individuals who were less committed to their relationships tended to use more aggressive and self-defeating humour with their partners during the diary period. Perhaps individuals who are less committed are more likely to utilize aggressive humour because they care less than their counterparts about their relationships' future. Individuals who do not feel that their relationships will continue, may have less to lose by putting down their partners with their humorous remarks.

Question 8. Do trait-level humour styles predict the corresponding daily relationship-focused humour styles?

I predicted that daily levels of relationship-focused humour styles would be strongly linked to the corresponding trait-level humour styles. For instance, people who report engaging in high levels of affiliative humour overall (on the HSQ) would engaged in high levels of affiliative humour with their partners (on the online diaries). Such findings would provide additional support for the predictive validity of the HSQ.

My results supported this hypothesis. Each of the trait-level humour styles was associated with the corresponding day-level humour style. However, the associations were not as strong as they could be, suggesting that there is variation between the way people use humour overall, and how they engage in humour use with their partners over time. It would be interesting to examine whether participants use more or less of each humour style with their partners than they use in general. Unfortunately, due to differences in item numbers and item scaling between the HSQ and the DHSQ, a direct comparison is not possible.

I also found that day-level aggressive humour was associated with trait-level self-defeating humour. Individuals who engaged in hostile humour directed at their partners tended to report engaging in higher amounts of excessively self-disparaging humour in general. Similarly, I found that day-level self-defeating humour was associated with trait-levels of aggressive humour. Individuals who put themselves down to make their partners laugh also reported engaging in more hostile humour overall. These associations were not surprising and confirm past research with the HSQ that shows positive associations between aggressive and self-defeating humour styles (Cann et al., 2008; Kazarian & Martin, 2004; Martin et al., 2003). It appears that some people have a tendency to use hostile disparaging humour in general, be it directed at themselves, in the presence of their partners or others (day-level and trait-level self-defeating humour, respectively), at others (trait-level aggressive humour), or at their partners (day-level aggressive humour).

Limitations

The present thesis has a number of limitations. First, I relied exclusively on self-report to obtain measures of humour styles and relationship variables. Self-report is subject to a number of limitations, including social desirability bias and inaccurate recall. The problem of social desirability bias may be especially relevant in the study of humour, which is viewed as a highly desirable personality trait. However, the daily diary approach used in the current investigation likely reduced the impact of social desirability and inaccurate recall. For each daily diary, participants were asked to indicate a number of positive and negative interactions that occurred with their partners over the past three days. The completion of this measure may have enhanced participants' ability to reflect on and recall interactions in their relationships over the three day diary period.

Additionally, it is likely that my measurement of relationship-focused humour styles, which also asked about the last three days, is less subject to the limitations of self-report than are trait-level assessments. Individuals are likely to give more accurate reports of their humour use when they are only asked to reflect upon how they used humour with their partners during the past three days.

Another limitation to the present research was the relatively homogenous sample of Canadian university students. All participants were involved in heterosexual dating relationships and the majority of participants were European-Canadian and female. Because of the narrow range of participants in this study, it is unwise to generalize my results outside of a predominately female heterosexual North American university population. Future research should investigate whether similar results are obtained in studies with older, married individuals, individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds or cultures, or individuals involved in same-sex relationships. Moreover, future researchers should attempt to sample a balanced number of males and females.

Another limitation with my sample was the high degree of relationship satisfaction reported by participants. The majority of participants appeared to be highly satisfied with their romantic relationships. Therefore, it is unclear whether the results from my study would apply to relationships characterized by less relationship satisfaction and higher amounts of relationship dissatisfaction.

Due to the methodological design of my study, I cannot demonstrate causality. Although the time-lagged analyses provided stronger evidence concerning the direction of the associations between humour styles and relationship variables than cross-sectional

correlations, definite answers about causality would require an experimental methodology.

Another methodological limitation to the present research was the individual approach I used to study dating relationships. Apart from asking participants' partners to complete a measure of their relationship satisfaction, all my data were obtained from only one member of each couple. However, dating relationships are inherently interdependent (Campbell & Kashy, 2002). That is, a participant's scores on an outcome variable can be influenced by his or her partner's characteristics. The Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Kashy & Kenny, 2000) is a sophisticated means of data analyses that uses the dyad as the unit of analysis and can examine both actor and partner effects. For example, an individual's relationship satisfaction can be influenced by his or her own humour styles (actor effect) and his or her partner's humour styles (partner effect). Future research using the APIM approach would allow for a more comprehensive study of humour styles and dating relationships.

Strengths

Despite the limitations discussed above, my study had a number of strengths. First, I examined humour using a multidimensional conception of humour styles that assessed both positive and negative uses of humour, as well as humour that is self-focused and other-focused. Using a measure that included both positive and negative styles of humour allowed me to discover how humour use can be both beneficial and detrimental to relationships. Moreover, I assessed how participants used humour specifically in interactions with their partners, as opposed to across all relationships. A

measure of humour styles that is relationship-focused is likely more relevant to the study of relationships than a trait-level assessment of humour styles.

I also utilized a two-dimensional conception of relationship satisfaction, as opposed a traditional, unidimensional perspective. Using a two-dimensional measure of relationship satisfaction allowed me to conduct a more comprehensive investigation of humour styles and relationship satisfaction. Indeed, the results confirmed some differential findings with relationship satisfaction versus dissatisfaction.

The diary approach, or repeated-measures approach, was a significant strength of the present study. By collecting measures of humour use, positive and negative interactions, and relationship satisfaction over time, I was able to utilize HLM in order to track changes in these variables across approximately four weeks. This is a significant advantage over traditional cross-sectional designs that assess humour and relationship satisfaction at one time period.

Finally, this study was the first to utilize time-lagged analyses to investigate the direction of the associations between humour styles and relationship satisfaction and relationship interactions. Although these analyses do not directly assess causality, they offered some insight about possible causal relationships and provide a starting point for future investigations.

Future Directions

The study of humour and romantic relationships is relatively young; even more so is the study of humour styles and romantic relationships. Therefore, there are a number of avenues to be explored.

First, further research is needed to clarify the association between humour styles and relationship persistence. One study found that more affiliative humour was predictive of relationship dissolution (Puhlik-Doris, 2004) whereas other investigations (Saroglou et al., 2010), including the present study, found that affiliative humour was predictive of relationship endurance. A longitudinal study that assessed relationship-focused humour styles and relationship status across time would be helpful in clarifying the association between harmless joking and relationship endurance.

Although many studies have demonstrated that humour is associated with relationship satisfaction, the mechanisms for this association remain unclear. What other variables factor in to the associations between humour styles and relationship satisfaction? For example, what is the relative influence of attachment styles, commitment, personality traits, self-esteem, psychological well-being, and conflict style on the associations between humour styles and relationship outcome variables? To examine this question, a large scale study that included a number of questionnaires and complex statistical analyses is needed.

Furthermore, the direction of causality remains uncertain. Does affiliative humour cause individuals to be more satisfied with their relationships, or does relationship satisfaction lead to affiliative humour? Although the present study provided some tentative evidence to answer these questions, an experimental design that manipulates humour levels would be ideal. For example, a group of participants could be taught to engage in high degrees of harmless joking and witty banter with their romantic partners. If relationship satisfaction were to increase in response to this manipulation, it would suggest that affiliative humour enhances relationship satisfaction. Alternatively,

researchers could study the humour use of couples involved in couples' therapy. If successful couples' therapy was associated with an increase in relationship satisfaction, researchers could examine if those couples engaged in more affiliative humour with each other after their relationship satisfaction increased. If couples who became satisfied with their relationships started to engage in more affiliative humour, this would suggest that increased relationship satisfaction enhances affiliative humour. A laboratory experiment would also be useful in clarifying the question of causality. Couples could be brought into the lab and randomly assigned to tell either a non-hostile joke to their partners or make a humorous, yet hurtful critique of their partners. If relationship satisfaction was impacted by this manipulation, the causality conundrum could be illuminated.

Conclusion

To summarize the major findings, I demonstrated that the positive humour styles were associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction, lower levels of relationship dissatisfaction, and positive interactions in dating relationships. With respect to the direction of these associations, there was a reciprocal association between affiliative humour and relationship satisfaction, and between affiliative humour and positive interactions. There were also unidirectional associations between variables. Dissatisfaction and negative interactions predicted lower levels of affiliative humour. Affiliative humour appears to be especially relevant to the study of dating relationships. The amount of affiliative humour that individuals engaged in was the only humour style that predicted partners' relationship satisfaction and relationship persistence.

In general, the negative humour styles were associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction, higher levels of relationship dissatisfaction, fewer positive

relationship interactions, and more negative relationship interactions. With respect to the direction of these associations, aggressive humour had a reciprocal relationship with relationship satisfaction. In terms of unidirectional associations, when individuals had engaged in more positive interactions during previous days, they engaged in less aggressive humour in the future. Conversely, when they had engaged in more aggressive humour on previous days, they experienced more negative interactions in the future. Similarly, when individuals engaged in more aggressive humour on previous days, they experienced more relationship dissatisfaction in the future. With respect to unidirectional associations, aggressive humour was the only humour style that predicted future relationship dissatisfaction and negative interactions. All other unidirectional associations demonstrated that humour use was predicted by components of relationship satisfaction or interactions between dating couples. For instance, higher levels relationship satisfaction and positive interactions predicted future decreases in self-defeating humour. Next to affiliative humour, aggressive humour appears to be the second most important humour style in the study of dating relationships.

The present thesis offers a significant contribution to the study of humour and dating relationships by demonstrating that the types of humour that people use with their dating partners over time is associated with relationship satisfaction, positive and negative interactions in their relationships, partners' relationship satisfaction, and relationship persistence over time. The current thesis expanded on past research by measuring humour use and relationship satisfaction across time, and by conducting time-lagged analyses to investigate the direction of causality.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Consent Form – Part 1

Project Title: Humor and Dating Relationships

Investigators: Sara Caird (M.Sc. Candidate) and Dr. Rod Martin

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me, and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate.

Participant's Name (print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Experimenter's Name (print) _____

Signature _____

Appendix B

Feedback Sheet – Part 1

Project Title: Humor and Dating Relationships

Investigators: Sara Caird (M.Sc. Candidate) and Dr. Rod Martin

This study is being conducted by Sara Caird (M.Sc. Candidate), under the supervision of Dr. Rod Martin. The purpose of this study is to examine whether humor usage is related to relationship satisfaction and stability among young dating couples.

The quality of one's interpersonal relationships is an important contributor to psychological well-being. Though researchers generally agree that a sense of humor is an important component in a successful relationship, little research has been conducted examining how humor may impact intimate relationships, and most research has focused on married couples. This study will help clarify the role that humor plays in dating relationships and could provide some useful information to mental health professionals.

Thank you for participating in the first section of this study! Your involvement is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sara Caird or Dr. Rod Martin.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Director of the Office of Research Ethics (ethics@uwo.ca, 519-661-3036).

If you are interested in the general results of this study, they should be available by August 2011. Feel free to contact Sara Caird.

If you are interested in learning more about this topic, please refer to the following references:

Campbell, L., Martin, R. A., & Ward, J. R. (2008). An observational study of humor use while resolving conflict in dating couples. *Personal Relationships*, 15, 41-55.

Martin, R.A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J., & Weir, K. (2003). Individual differences in the uses of humor and their relation to psychological well-being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37(1), 48-75.

Rusbult, C.E., Martz, J.M., & Agnew, C.R. (1998) The Investment Model Scale: Measuring commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. *Personal Relationships*, 5, 357-391.

Appendix C

Feedback Sheet – Part 2 (Email Message)

Subject: Humor and Dating Relationship Study – Feedback Sheet

Dear <Participant Name>,

Thank you for completing the daily logs! You will now receive your second research credit.

This study is being conducted by Sara Caird (M.Sc. Candidate), under the supervision of Dr. Rod Martin. The purpose of this study is to examine whether humor usage is related to relationship satisfaction and stability among young dating couples.

The quality of one's interpersonal relationships is an important contributor to psychological well-being. Though researchers generally agree that a sense of humor is an important component in a successful relationship, little research has been conducted examining how humor may impact intimate relationships, and most research has focused on married couples. This study will help clarify the role that humor plays in dating relationships and could provide some useful information to mental health professionals.

We hypothesized that individuals who used positive styles of humor (e.g., use of humor to cope with stress and enhance social relationships) would have greater relationship satisfaction, and those who used negative styles of humor (e.g., use humor in aggressive ways or to put themselves down) would have less relationship satisfaction. We also predicted that individuals who used positive styles of humor would perceive more "alternatives" to their current relationship (e.g., the availability of other equally appealing relationships) and may be more likely to break up.

Thank you for participating in this study! Your involvement is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sara Caird or Dr. Rod Martin.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Director of the Office of Research Ethics (ethics@uwo.ca, 519-661-3036).

If you are interested in the general results of this study, they should be available by August 2011. Feel free to contact Sara Caird.

If you are interested in learning more about this topic, please refer to the following references:

Campbell, L., Martin, R. A., & Ward, J. R. (2008). An observational study of humor use while resolving conflict in dating couples. *Personal Relationships*, 15, 41-55.

Martin, R.A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J., & Weir, K. (2003). Individual differences in the uses of humor and their relation to psychological well-being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37(1), 48-75.

Rusbult, C.E., Martz, J.M., & Agnew, C.R. (1998) The Investment Model Scale: Measuring commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. *Personal Relationships*, 5, 357-391.

Appendix D

Letter of Information and Consent – Partner (Email Message)

Subject: UWO Psychology Study - Humor and Dating Relationships

Dear <Partner Name>,

<Name of Partner> is participating in a study on humor use in close relationships at the University of Western Ontario. He/she has given their consent for us to contact you about this study, and ask you to complete a series of questions about your relationship with him/her. Completing these questions will take approximately 3 minutes and your **participation would be greatly appreciated**. You do not have to complete the questionnaire and you may leave questions unanswered. By submitting this questionnaire, you have consented to participate in this study.

The information obtained in this study will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. The only place your name will appear is on a list of participants. This list is kept separate from the questionnaire data. You and your dating partner's responses will be completely confidential; we will not inform him/her of your responses and vice versa. The online questionnaires are completed over a secure site and all computer files are password protected.

There are no known risks to participating in this study. You can email Sara Caird if you have any questions about your participation.

To complete the questionnaire, please click on the link below (or copy and paste into your web browser):

<weblink>

You will be asked to enter a password number. Your password number is: XXXX

Thank you for your help with this study!

Sara Caird
M.Sc. Candidate
Psychology Department
University of Western Ontario

Appendix E



Department of Psychology The University of Western Ontario
 Room 7418 Social Sciences Centre,
 London, ON, Canada N6A 5C1
 Telephone: (519) 661-2067 Fax: (519) 661-3961

Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice

Review Number	09 12 14	Approval Date	09 12 28
Principal Investigator	Rod Martin/Sara Caird	End Date	10 04 30
Protocol Title	Humor and dating relationships		
Sponsor	n/a		

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Department of Psychology Research Ethics Board (PREB) has granted expedited ethics approval to the above named research study on the date noted above.

The PREB is a sub-REB of The University of Western Ontario's Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. (See Office of Research Ethics web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/>)

This approval shall remain valid until end date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the University's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the PREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of research assistant, telephone number etc). Subjects must receive a copy of the information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the PREB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to the PREB for approval.

Members of the PREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the PREB.

Clive Seligman Ph.D.

Chair, Psychology Expedited Research Ethics Board (PREB)

The other members of the 2009-2010 PREB are: David Dozois, Bill Fisher, Riley Hinson and Steve Lupker

CC: UWO Office of Research Ethics

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files



Department of Psychology The University of Western Ontario
 Room 7418 Social Sciences Centre.
 London, ON, Canada N6A 5C1
 Telephone: (519) 661-2067 Fax: (519) 661-3961

Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice

Review Number	10 08 01	Approval Date	10 08 09
Principal Investigator	Rod Martin/Sara Caird	End Date	11 03 31
Protocol Title	Humor and dating relationships		
Sponsor	n/a		

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- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

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Clive Seligman Ph.D.

Chair, Psychology Expedited Research Ethics Board (PREB)

The other members of the 2009-2010 PREB are: David Dozois, Bill Fisher, Riley Hinson and Steve Lupker

CC: UWO Office of Research Ethics

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files

Appendix F**Demographic Questionnaire**

Please tell us a bit about yourself by completing the following questionnaire.

1. First and last name: _____
2. Main email address: _____; Alt. email address _____
3. Current age in years: _____
4. Gender (circle one): Male Female
5. First name of current dating partner: _____
6. Email address of current dating partner: _____
7. Gender of current dating partner (circle one): Male Female
8. Length of current dating relationship: _____ year(s) and _____ months
9. Ethnicity (group that you most identify with; please check one):
 - ☐ European-Canadian (White)
 - ☐ Native-Canadian (e.g., Native Indian)
 - ☐ African/Caribbean-Canadian (Black)
 - ☐ South Asian-Canadian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, etc.)
 - ☐ Asian-Canadian (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, etc.)
 - ☐ Latin American-Canadian (e.g. Hispanic)
 - ☐ Other (please specify) _____
10. Were you born in Canada? (check one) no ☐ yes ☐

 If "No":
 a) How long have you lived in Canada? _____ (years)
 b) What country were you born in? _____
11. Is English your first language? (check one) no ☐ yes ☐

 If "No":
 a) How long have you been speaking English? _____ (years)

Appendix G

Daily Interactions with Dating Partner

Below is a list of interactions that commonly occur in dating relationships. Please read each one and indicate whether this event HAPPENED TO YOU IN THE PAST 3 DAYS in your interactions with your boyfriend/girlfriend. If an event did happen, check the box beside it.

- ☐ I said something that made my partner feel loved.
- ☐ I tried to show my partner the bright side of things.
- ☐ I criticized my partner.
- ☐ I showed an interest in the interactions of my partner's day.
- ☐ I disclosed my thoughts or emotions to my partner.
- ☐ I argued with my partner.
- ☐ I let my partner down or broke a promise.
- ☐ I listened to or comforted my partner.
- ☐ I helped my partner out with something important to him/her.
- ☐ I was dishonest with my partner.
- ☐ I was affectionate with my partner.
- ☐ I made and discussed plans for our future.
- ☐ I talked in the inclusive "we".
- ☐ I made a special effort to spend time with my partner.
- ☐ My partner and I went out to do something enjoyable (e.g., dinner, movie)
- ☐ I tried to deceive my partner.
- ☐ I flirted with other people in front of my partner.
- ☐ I talked about the attractiveness of people of the opposite sex in my partner's presence.
- ☐ I praised or complimented my partner about something.
- ☐ Did enjoyable things with boyfriend/girlfriend.
- ☐ Had intimate time with boyfriend/girlfriend.

Appendix H**Humour Experiences with Dating Partner (DHSQ)**

Below is a list of statements describing ways people may express humour. Please read each statement and indicate how often you have engaged in each of these forms of humour with your boyfriend/girlfriend DURING THE PAST THREE DAYS. Answer by circling one of the options below each statement.

1. I told my boyfriend/girlfriend a joke or said something funny to make him/her laugh.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

2. I found that my humorous outlook on life kept me from getting overly upset or depressed about things.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

3. I teased my boyfriend/girlfriend when he/she made a mistake.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

4. I let my boyfriend/girlfriend laugh at me or make fun of me more than I should have.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

5. I laughed and joked around with my boyfriend/girlfriend.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

6. I coped with a problem or difficulty by thinking about some amusing aspect of the situation.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

7. My boyfriend/girlfriend seemed offended or hurt by something I said or did while trying to be funny.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

8. I said funny things to put myself down.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

9. I was able to think of witty things to say to amuse my boyfriend/girlfriend.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

10. I was amused about something funny when I was all by myself.
not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

11. I used humor to put down my boyfriend/girlfriend in a teasing way.

not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

12. I tried to make my boyfriend/girlfriend like or accept me more by saying something funny about my own weaknesses, blunders, or faults.

not at all once twice 3-5 times more than 5 times

Appendix I

PANQ

Now please answer the 6 questions below with regard to how you feel AT THIS MOMENT about your boyfriend/girlfriend. Answer by circling one of the options (1 to 10) located below each statement, using the scale provided.

1. Considering only the POSITIVE QUALITIES of this person, and ignoring the negative ones, evaluate how positive these qualities are.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not at all				moderately				extremely	
positive				positive				positive	

2. Considering only the NEGATIVE QUALITIES of this person, and ignoring the positive ones, evaluate how negative these qualities are.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not at all				moderately				extremely	
negative				negative				negative	

3. Considering only the POSITIVE FEELINGS you have towards this person at this moment, and ignoring the negative feelings, evaluate how positive these feelings are.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not at all				moderately				extremely	
positive				positive				positive	

4. Considering only the NEGATIVE FEELINGS you have towards this person at this moment, and ignoring the positive feelings, evaluate how negative these feelings are.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not at all				moderately				extremely	
negative				negative				negative	

5. Considering only the GOOD FEELINGS you have about your RELATIONSHIP with this person at this moment, and ignoring the bad feelings, evaluate how good these feelings are.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not at all				moderately				extremely	
good				good				good	

6. Considering only the BAD FEELINGS you have about your RELATIONSHIP with this person at this moment, and ignoring the good feelings, evaluate how bad these feelings are.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not at all				moderately			extremely		
bad				bad			bad		